

THE
SORCERER:

A TALE.

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

VEIT IVEBER.

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THE

S O R C E R E R :

A TALE.

IN the golden age of monkish sway over the wills and understandings of men; when the cowed head was the only repository of the secrets of Omniscience; when the glance of a laic behind the curtain of nature was high treason against God, and all his knowledge was accounted contraband, and derived from the Devil; when to think was impiety; when science led to the pillory, and wisdom to the stake; there lived in Salerno, tranquil and happy in the cultivation

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vation of literature, Pietro Barliardo, occupied in liberal studies in an age that constrained Galileo to abjure the convictions of his reason, that brought Savonarola to the flames, and consigned John Faustus to the Devil, for their generous efforts to enlighten their ignorant contemporaries. A century, that had risen and flourished under the eye of Barliardo, hastened to decay: it had enriched him with experience and the materials of wisdom, and study had taught him to employ them. Aware of the nobler uses of science, he applied his attainments to no purposes of idle parade: to rival the clergy in the arts, which it had impropriated and set it's landmarks on; to boast, that he traced nature in he most secret excursions, and

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was a confident of her most clandestine transactions, made no part of his plan : he professed, but to inculcate into the mind of youth civil and classical erudition ; and this the monks did not consider as an encroachment on their patent, but, while they were left the uncontested conduits of divine truth, allowed him to be resorted to as a reservoir of profane and pagan literature.

Secret as the councils of conspirators or the debaucheries of hypocrites, were the researches of Barliardo into the mysteries of magic ; for not content with the arts that govern men, he wished to push his conquests into other regions, and bend superior beings to his will. Yet so guarded were all his measures, that eagle-eyed suspicion was foiled, and

vigilance in vain lay in watch for him ;
 though his green and sound old age,
 vigorous and unimpaired at ninety-five,
 gave the alarm to invidious observation ;
 and unless Lucifer were his physician,
 and had been feed with the reversion of
 Pietro's soul, it seemed impossible, that
 at an age when his vital sap should have
 been exhausted, the honours of his head
 withered and decayed, and death should
 have visibly meditated the fatal blow,
 that the old man could retain the fresh-
 ness of juvenile vigour : so reasoned the
 monks, and such reasoning became
 them. Their emissaries mingled with
 his pupils ; but without extracting any
 matter for their malice, and without any
 other consequence, than inducing Pietro
 to renounce the instruction of youth, to
 which

which he imputed the jealousy of the clergy, that he might not provoke their envy to more effectual measures, and lose the consolation of returning to dust in consecrated ground. He resolved to devote the last chapter of his life, to the education of an orphan nephew, whom fate sufficiently called on him to protect, by depriving the child of every other friend. Him he adopted as his son, declared the heir to all his estates, and laboured to enrich with probity, and adorn with literature: he secluded himself from all commerce with the world: books of astrology and magic, his nephew Benedetto, and a poor cousin, by name Francesco, whom he had taken into the house as a playmate and superintendant for the former, composed his whole society.

The child alone cropt the joys of the passing moment; the harvest of the old man and of Francesco, lived but in expectation. Though the latter found in the house of Barliardo every necessary, and many conveniences, his young heart panting for freedom, would have spurned these advantages for a wider range of liberty, had not a fair neighbour, the daughter of a decayed and disabled sculptor, overbalanced the chagrin he endured from the peevishness of the old man, and the tediousness he felt in the insipid amusements of the child. No sooner had Benedetto wearied himself with his sports, no sooner had Barliardo immured himself in his library, to acquaint himself in books with beings whom he dreaded to invoke; than Fran-

cesco stole to Enemonde, and raised with kisses on the lips of his enamoured girl, a more blissful spirit than ever necromancy, with all its dread incantations, has conjured up.

This gentle sprite was no less than the gay god of love; who esteems magic circles of crucifixes, deaths heads, shin bones, and swords, no more than the burning torrents of Vesuvius do the reliques of St. Januarius, or than Obadiah's coach-horse did the sign of the cross: who creeps through the grates of convents, mocks the precautions of monks, and forces his way to the human heart, through every human sense: that god, who though a child, is absolute over men; who, though himself blind, is the surest of guides; and to whom,

though he has no longer altars in any church, all the world bows the knee. When Francesco lay in the magic circle of Enemonde's arms, and murmured the invocation of love, the spirit freely laid itself open to his demands, solved his doubts, confirmed his hopes, and predicted by its interpreter prattling hope, the youth's entire destiny. Love had soon revealed all his secrets, and for further information, referred the inquirer to the spirit of marriage ; and this the amorous boy was eager enough to invoke. Still within the propitious circle, with sighs, pressures of the hand, melting looks, rapturous smiles, with fond complaints, tender expostulations, with transports of rage, jealousy and despair, the impassioned boy besought the connubial power

to initiate him in the most precious of mysteries: a secret more valuable than any contained in the obelisks of Egypt, and which had alchymists ever tasted, they would have sought no further for the philosophers stone. Could Francesco have obtained this, he would have dug through solid fire, swum through liquid, have made Bonzes' and Bramins' penances appear the probations of children, have bound his tongue in eternal silence, and have subscribed to the most dreadful law that ancient or modern Dracos have enacted; he would have renounced his reason, received the writings of priests as the word of God, and submitted his faith to the guidance of hoary ignorance, and inveterate error. But of this scope all his shafts fell short ;
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his forces, which had carried him through all the former stages, failed him in the last. He erected altars among the fragrant myrtles, under the thick shade of the broad platane and the gigantick larch: he prayed in the cool of eve, beside the rippling rill, that changed its murmurs into prayers for him; he animated the silent and stagnant noon, with his entreaties and complaints: in vain were all; the spirit of marriage remained inexorable.

‘When Francesco had essayed every incense, had exhausted every form of imprecation without effect, he at last asked his Enemonde; why she denied her hand to him, to whom she had so freely given her heart?’

Enemonde.

Enemonde. Because I cannot bring thee bags of gold, to perpetuate the lustre of my charms, and to preserve the cheek, which thou now fondly thinkest so smooth and vermeil, smooth and vermeil still.

Francesco. Enemonde ?

Enemonde. Save words for strangers : I read thy answer in the indignant flashes of thy eye, and the reproachful swell of thy lip. Well I know, that not the charms of person alone, with which, on the credit of three witnesses, my lover, my glass, and my vanity, I believe nature has endowed me, have retained thy spirited heart in subjection to my caprice ; but I am certain also that the impetuous, impassioned Francesco, has not chosen me for the object of his love, because my features are seldom distorted
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by passion, and my heart is never the seat of malignity. Sure am I, that my Francesco would not desert me, would not make my nuptial bed a bier, because a withering fever had blenched my cheeks, or swept the tresses from my head; but I am too certain that his insatiate eyes would no longer dwell with rapture on my countenance, should fallow sickness ingrain my now florid cheeks with her morbid hue. Believe me, loved youth, sensual desire finds the materials for every passion, however fancy may colour them: dress and adorn it as you will, the substance remains the same.—Let me speak out, Francesco, you shall find I have anticipated your answer.

We girls too, are tyrannised by our senses, and seldom has reason a veto
against

against their resolves. A shrivelled skeleton, worn with care, consumed by disease, and broken by calamities and afflictions; a living corps dry as a mummy, and shadowy as an apparition, looking woe, and breathing pestilence, though it should teem with the virtues of saints, and were to plead with the tongue of angels, would never move us to desire. Blooming youth, delicate beauty, and sparkling vivacity, are the allurements of women: strength, courage and gaiety, the attractions of men. The chains, by which we hold you, time soon wears through: the cement, which binds us to you, time hardens and confirms. Your empire over us, is founded on the need the feeble labour under of protection; our power over you, is the child of curiosity and

and desire : when the parents die, whence must the helpless infant derive sustenance. Your sex, in the confidence of its strength, shakes off the light incumbrance without difficulty : nay your chains fall from you of themselves. You grow callous and indifferent to our caresses, you consider our tenderness as a duty, and seldom is duty rewarded with gratitude and love. You have enacted the laws of constancy and fidelity, and like legislators exempt yourselves from the observance of them. In fine, while you wander free as the wind, we languish in slavery : judge then if it behoves me not, to submit to the yoke of marriage with caution.

Francesco. Deep observations, Enemonde ; but still only the preface to thy discourse.

Enemonde.

Enemonde. Do not mock me, Francesco, I speak what the good spirit of love inspires me with.

Francesco. Good spirits inspire good meanings, and is not a refusal of thy hand the substance of all this eloquence? Riches, you give me to understand, make the happy husband. Ah why did I not place my affections on the image of our Lady of Loretto! riches that has in plenty. The wooden doll glittering with gold and gems, would soften into life beneath my impassioned clasp, and become a panting bride: the lifeless lips would melt with my ardent kisses, and wake to sensibility and animation.

Enemonde. Why wilt thou mistake me? Once we needed not the interpretation of language to communicate our most secret thoughts;

thoughts; now language is insufficient to render us intelligible. Thou art a man like others of thy race, and the exceptions among you, are formed but for the cell and the hermitage. Your changes are more frequent than the moon's or the tide's; you are more inconstant than the weather; 'tis less difficult to chain the air than to confine your affections. Shall I not dread then to lose thy love? I also am a woman, and the differences among us fit their subjects but for the hospital and cloister. The headlong propensity to love, the pungent rage to be loved, employ all our wishes and efforts, inspire all our arts, and teach us all our graces: these idols of the sex are equally adored by the prude and the coquet, the girl and the woman: the rites different, but the

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the devotion the same. Impelled and directed by these, we vary the dress and the manners, allure you with kindness, tantalise you with coyness, and retain you by jealousy, For you, mirrors of your tastes, we are gay, sad, tender, sprightly, reserved or open. To your approbations all our actions are addressed: for you the small footed nymph wears the scant vestment; for you the taper arm is left exposed, and the snowy bosom bares its opening rosebuds to the rude breezes; for you the luxuriant tresses float unconfined, the vocal melody is cultivated, and the laughing dimple embellishes the peachy cheek. All for love, is the device of woman: we fly you, that you may pursue; with the breath of affected indifference we inflame your ardour;

dour; we deny, that you may not perceive how eagerly we bestow, lest you should despise the favour for its cheapness; we frown at your amorous thefts, to conceal our joy and inability to withhold what you have thought to ravish. We all labour to accelerate the golden period of our lives, the blissful era of love: even the growing girl, yet unripe for the embrace of man, seeks to hide her immaturity, and anticipate pubescence; we all strive to protract the precious season, spite of age, infirmities and wrinkles, and flutter on the precincts of it, like a recently departed spirit, round the loved regions of life. The woman who does not own this, disguises her feelings, which all declare, that with love the first light gushes upon her soul. Thóu, I own,
loved

loved Francesco ! art my sun, my god,
the better creator of my life and happiness.

Francesco. Maiden, why delude me
with empty caresses ? To what end
cover with cloth of gold, the block on
which thou behead'st me ? Why crown
me with flowers, but to immolate me ?

Enemonde. Immolate thee ? Injurious
Francesco---I live but in thy love : how
then can I consent to destroy thy passion
by a marriage, contracted in poverty,
and consummated in distress ?

Francesco. Is that all, Enemonde ? that
the mighty Alps that separates us ? How
easily removed ! crown me with the con-
senting kisses, divine girl, thou art my bride
to-morrow. Have I not strength to la-
bour ? hast not thou spirit to assist me ?

Enemonde. I have not spirit to assist thee, when I think that every effort robs me of a portion of my charms, and of what alone renders my charms valuable--thy love. When labour has worn the polish from my now smooth limbs, when burning suns have shrivelled and embrowned my silky skin, and penury has dried the shining moisture of my eyes, with what transports, loved Francesco, wilt thou behold me? or say, when a long day's toils has laid a load of sleep on thy drooping eyelids, when scarcely can a full night refresh thy weary limbs, and replenish thy drained juices, what leisure wilt thou find for love? I too have dreamt delightful visions of hymeneal bliss, have fancied it would convert toil into amusement, sow the barren
 . . . waste

waste of penury with roses, and render it a land flowing with milk and honey. I conceived that in the bosom of my beloved, the gathered rain must be tasteful as the nectareous juice of Falernian vineyards ; the hardest crust more delicious than the high seasoned viands of luxury. I thought that the endearments of a loved consort could banish distress, his smiles dissipate affliction, spread down on the bare earth, and transmute a cot into a palace.

Francesco. And hast thou abandoned a belief to which I cling as to my hopes of Paradise ?

Enemonde. I have relinquished an opinion, of the error of which I had full demonstration, and thou wilt loose the dear delusion, when thou shalt have viewed

the proofs I can produce to thee of its falshood. Let us proceed to yon hut and repose ourselves : the cool breath of eve begins to revive the fainting herbage, and Vittorio, its tenant, will soon return with the miserable earnings of his daily toils. From him I have learnt how fastidious love abhors the habitation of poverty. See ! here comes his wife---who would recognise in her meagre, squalid form, the fair Rosabel, who, two short years ago, was the delight of your sex, and the envy of her own.

Francesco. O vanity, vanity ! when thou founded'st thy throne in the female heart, thou but took'st possession of thy birthright. Deform not those lips framed for the seat of joy, with that scornful smile ;

smile ; thou must, Enemonde, confess, that through every stage of life, a woman pants to excel all her sex, and monopolise admiration. Rosabel no longer excites wonder in one sex, nor jealousy in the other. Why should she ? Ought her wishes to wander beyond the possession of her husband's affections ?

Enemonde. Did she but possess them, I grant you, that the rest were superfluous---but let herself decide.—Heaven bless you, housewife ; you are sinking with fatigue ! Your spouse, methinks, might alleviate your labour.—He might ease my labour, said the young wife, and wiped the tear from her languid eye ; he might ease my labour ; but, alas ! he is weighed to the earth with his own.

Francesco. Is it not sweet to you, to toil for him ; to him, to toil for you ; to both, to labour for your children ?

Rosabel. Alas ! I could chearfully hew my way through the present, did but a joyous future promise to terminate our misery. But all our pains scarcely defend our poor hut against the driving rain and beating tempest ; scarcely procure these coarse garbs to our shivering bodies, scarcely feed the wick of life with the coarsest aliments. Oft have I besought the blessed virgin for children : now with fervent gratitude I thank her for having denied them. How had I procured the strength and milk to nourish them ? How had I found time to attend to them ?---Mother or child must have perished.

Enemonde.

Enemonde. Toil is painful, my good woman ; but surely a loved husband's tenderness may assuage its rigour.

Rosabel. I thought so once ; but marriage has dissolved the delusion. How indeed, or when, can love find a place in our hearts ? Labour occupies the day, and fatigue claims the night. Can desire live in the dirt and sweat of penury, or the tender frame of pleasure endure unremitting toil and wasting indigence ? However my looks at Vittorio may overflow with affection, he converts them into food for his chagrin ; I may pour out the consolations with which love inspires me, he curses his folly for having united his fortune to that of a creature, who weighs him down to wretchedness. I seek to dispel his gloom,
and

and mitigate his anguish, by tender solicitude and fond endearments. He furlily vows to join some band of robbers, and defy infamy and the wheel for a less laborious subsistence; and if I murmur a reproachful syllable, I am menaced with his poignard. Some months since, a consuming sickness brought me to the verge of the tomb; and while appetite sunk beneath anguish and debility, he was not unkind: but when hunger returned before strength, and I ate without earning, he grudged me every morsel, and repined at contributing to my subsistence. O marriage! is it thus thou unitest souls, that one shall think that stolen from itself, which it imparts to the other?

Francesco. He was once not so ungentle.

Rosabel.

Rosabel. Never was he thus, till his ill-forted match and its consequences ruined his fortune, and embittered his temper. Because he gave his hand to his inferior in rank and wealth, he was driven from his father's house, disinherited, and left to subsist by the labour of his hands. Yet, during the first weeks of our nuptials, he was content and gay, and often vowed, that with me this wretched hut was more precious to him than the whole of Salerno. But, ah, how soon he changed ! Accustomed to an easy, luxurious life in his paternal mansion, he was unable to submit to the hard fare of indigence. Infected by his discontent, chagrin cankered the roses of my cheeks ; my soft, round arm became coarse and meagre,

care

care quenched the fire of my eyes, and my face no longer beamed pleasure upon him.

A gruff voice roared from the hut,
Eternal gossip, must the work stand still
for thy chatter? on to the vineyard,
or ———

Rosabel started, and looked terrified ;
Vittorio is coming, she cried ; I must
go, or he will beat me.

Francesco. What ? I will run and re-
monstrate——

Rosabel. For Heaven's sake, stay :---
should you interest yourself for me, you
will excite his jealousy, and I shall fare
the worse. But have I not merited this
treatment ? I might have foreseen what
must be the sad consequences of our im-
prudent marriage ; they glared upon
me ;

me ; but I shut my eyes to them as to a painful light : God keep you both from such willful blindness !

She proceeded to the vineyard : the lovers returned to the city. Pondering on this impressive lesson, they were long immersed in silence : at last the impassioned youth exclaimed, And must thou never be mine, Enemonde ?

Enemonde. Not till our work shall be our pastime, not our business ; the cradle, not the grave of our love. Serve the old Barliardo with diligence, and his will may repay thy attentions.

Francesco. Never : he would think every zecchin bestowed on me, a theft from his darling Benedetto.

Enemonde. One treasure, at least, he will not grudge to communicate to thee---

thee---his knowledge ; and did he not
thence derive all his riches ?

Francesco. Science, my Enemonde, is
not of so easy transference as money :
years after years must creep their snail-
paced circuit, ere I could possess thee.

Enemonde. Dost thou fear that age
would render me hideous ?

Francesco. No : but I fear the allure-
ments and guiles of Horatio Orfalini.
Has he not of late sought the habitation
of thy father ; and what should wealthy
youth seek in the mansion of poverty, if
not thee ? What attractions could the
suffering cries of age, oppressed by the
conjoined force of infirmity and sickness,
have to him, were they not the price of
thy converse ? Ha, what a ray of ago-
nizing suspicion does Hell flash on my
foul !

soul ! he perhaps, too surely, he has taught thee the worth of that gold, from which thou now expectest to reap con-nubial felicity !

Enemonde. Never shall my heart or head harbour a thought so odious, and so despicably irrational. As well might I place the pleasures of the table in eating the rankest viands off silver, or the joys of drinking in quaffing the vilest dregs from goblets of gold. I do not ask to riot in a profusion of riches ; or themselves they bestow nothing which my soul values ; but they *secure* every thing which constitutes my felicity. I ask not immoderate opulence ; but I ask that indigence and labour may not blast my charms before their date expires, and alienate thy affections from me. To

avoid this dreadful banishment from thy heart, this loss of every thing precious to me, I will never give thee my hand till fortune smiles on our union.

Francesco. Enemonde, thou art indeed lovely ; but not so lovely that the haughty mother of Orfalini will count thy charms for ancestors ; superior beings might admire thy understanding ; but will her ambitious mind consider thy wit as wealth ? Never art thou like to come to an agreement with her ; and for that very reason, sooner with the son.

Enemonde. Every thing is already settled with him.

Francesco. And my happiness fold with thy virtue !

Enemonde. Oh, that I could hate thee one half hour, for thinking so meanly of me.

me. Could I be tempted to set a price on my innocence, that price were my father's happiness. To know that by my crime, my unhappy parent lived in ease and affluence, would, if aught could, effect the impossible---reconcile me to impurity and guilt, quench the hell-flames that blazed in my bosom, and hush the barking monsters of my tortured conscience. What but this reflection could console me in the arms of a libertine, abandoned to infamy, and enslaved to unholy lust---what but the reflection, that, by this bargain with Hell, I sheltered my father from care, and fortified him against distress? Thou wert yesterday in our cot: sawest thou penury converted into abundance, the earthen jug transmuted into a silver cup,

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the rush hangings and rude mats replaced by Persian carpets, and tapestry of Indian workmanship? Wears not the paramour of the rich and generous Horatio a gorgeous robe? Say, is not she resplendent with starry brilliants?

Francesco. Sweet Enemonde, thy eyes dance not more gaily when thou expatiatest on riches, than when thou dissectest thy poverty. If thy yoke is of so easy sufferance, alone, why not consent to bear it with me?

Enemonde. Because I might become hideous, and thou inconstant.

Francesco. *Might!* But barely *might!* And wilt thou sacrifice thy happiness and mine to possibilities? Seest thou not how I melt away in the fire of my passions? how ungratified desires waste
my

my juices, and consume my vigour?
 And hast thou not wishes like mine?
 Too oft for denial, have thy burning
 kisses betrayed them: Do no anxious
 wants disturb thy breast? Too oft have
 thy half-smothered sighs revealed them.
 And canst thou not gratify those passions
 with another youth? cannot other lovers
 realise thy fond wishes? Canst thou re-
 solve to delay the harvest of love, till
 icy winter has stript thee of thy charms,
 and spread his snows over thee? All for
 love, is the female maxim; and the
 senses have a majority of suffrage in the
 choice of a lover: thyself hast avowed
 it. The tender, voluptuous Enemonde
 had never elected Francesco, the shriv-
 elled mummy, the pallid corpse, though
 mines of wisdom had enriched his mind,

and the honied dew of persuasion had distilled from his lips : so have thy ravings, sweet enthusiast, assured me. Thy senses are not less inclined since thy choice to prefer the robust and nervous form of the young Hercules, to the softer beauties of the Apollo ; and can thy Francesco compare in manly beauty with Horatio ? Horatio ! When I think of him, a raging fire devours my marrow, and my veins become too confined for my blood. Hear me devote myself, soul and body, to Hell, for vengeance on him, who robs me of thee. I will disguise myself, should his arts win thee, beyond the detection of fear or jealousy : I will mangle my visage, and change my speech, and, covered with impenetrable concealment, slide into the habitation

where thou and thy seducer riot in extacies of voluptuousness : there, by fictitious pictures, I will endear his charms and virtues to thee, and embellish all his perfections : I will make his caresses as necessary to thy heart as aliment to thy frame, or as summer suns to the ripening harvest ; and when thou hast treasured all thy joys in him ; when thou hast no food but his kisses, no place of rest but his arms, I will dash the vessel of thy happiness to the ground, and murder him in thy presence.

Enemonde. Dear, frantic youth ! how thou at once delightest and shokest me ! What proof of love like this madness ! I am thine, and will continue so, though I found thee a complication of vices, an aggregate of all depravities. Were an angel to woo me to his arms,

I would cling to thee, the elect of my heart, though thou wert a vessel of corruption, a bag of contagious pestilence : let the notaries of Heaven record my declaration, and let Hell heat its furnace seven-fold to avenge the smallest violation of it.

Francesco. Enemonde, thou shalt still be mine, or passion is indolent, and resolution fickle as fashion. Soon, soon shall my efforts obtain the golden fleece, though swarming monsters guard it. Our happiness, sweet love, germinates, but to rear it, requires all our attention : be thou constant, as I am resolved, and Alps shall not keep us separate. Adieu, my fair one !

He pressed the lips of his Enemonde with more than his wonted fervour, and, repeating his farewell, repaired to the habita-

habitation of Barliardo. He slid into the chamber, and found the careless Benedetto locked in sound but easy slumbers. Francesco envied the happy child his calm clear sleep, and cast himself, perturbed with passion, and troubled with crouding projects, on his couch, where no lenient power hovered over him and shed the soft dews of repose on his harassed mind. Jealousy stood beside his pillow, and whispered tales, that drove him to phrensy: Desire infused its cantharides into his blood, and his downy couch was a rack of agony to him. Sleep hovered over him, but to tantalize him with the hope of repose, that continually fled his eyelids. Like this night were many of the ensuing: his fierce desires lighted up fever in his body and phrensy

in his soul : the confidence, with which the assurance of Enemonde had filled him, gradually disappeared, as the last gleam of twilight fades away, when night asserts her domain over the whole hemisphere. Care harassed him without remission : in vain he strove to cast off the load of anxiety which weighed on his spirits and crushed every sentiment of pleasure. Every joy he had once loved grew insipid while higher bliss allured him : to lead Enemonde to the nuptial bed was the wish that tyrannised over him, and he brooded day and night on the means of accomplishing this purpose.

It chanced one day, as he had with cheerful promptitude accompanied Benedetto in all the meanders of spontaneous gaiety and mirthful caprice, and by participating

participating the wantonness of the boy had led him at his will, while he seemed to follow, that the old man, elated by the hilarity of the child, cast more grateful glances at the youth, who contributed so largely to the happiness of his darling. Francesco seized the moment, when gladness, and gratitude collected in his patron's countenance, like fructifying clouds in an April sky, and prepared by every art to make them descend in a golden shower. Praises of the lad's intelligence, frankness, and sensibility, opened the discourse, and, warmed with paternal fondness, Barliardo ratified every commendation with a, True, Francesco ! and he closed all with saying, 'tis a soft wax on which every stamp will leave a clear and perfect impression.

Francesco.

Francesco. Fortunate child, who will receive a form from the moulding of Barliardo, that princes or angels might envy him ! long have men inveighed on the folly and injustice of Fortune. Behold her calumniators refuted. All have said that she gives without reason, and takes away without justice ; that she raises to the throne those who, lower than the soles of the lowest, have been made the footstool of the vulgar ; and that she sets the foot of meanness on the neck of him to whom rank and riches have bowed the knee ; that she tears the corpse of the patriot from its grave, and loads it with obloquy and outrage, and canonizes the villain ; that she pours the poison of vice into vases of porphyry, and the precious myrrh of virtue into broken vessels ;

vessels ; that her whole administration is a game at cross purposes ; making the lame, couriers ; the blind, guides ; and the dumb, criers. Scandalous, groundless aspersions ; the sentence of interested judges ; the declaration of criminals on the rack, bent to exculpate themselves by accusing others ! at least, Fortune in her treatment to me and Benedetto has evinced her discernment, and demonstrated her equity. The gentle Benedetto she leads by the hands of the wise Barliardo to honour and opulence, to independence and happiness ; and me, unworthy as unfortunate, she leaves to grovel in poverty and neglect.

Pietro. How, Cousin ! do you style yourself poor ? have you not every necessary ? do you not enjoy numberless superfluities ?

superfluities? are your employments more than salutary exercise, than a sharp spice to enliven your pleasures, which daily enjoyment might render insipid? seest thou not in the future, as in the past, a laughing harvest spring gratuitous for thee? I sow for thee now; after me, Benedetto will provide for thee. *

Francisco. My Father! so my benefactor has permitted me to call him, and let that tender appellation assure him that all his benefits live in my memory; do not think that the mention of my unworthiness was intended to convey any reproach on you; it was but the grateful prattle of convalescence in the presence of its physician; a thanksgiving for preservation by enumerating the dangers averted. Your favour has rescued me
from

from indigence, and Benedetto's affection may perpetuate your benefits ; but does man need only raiment for his limbs, tasteful viands for his hunger, and repose for his weariness. 'The child thinks himself rich with these, 'tis true ; the boy too is content : in selfish joy spring all their transports ; they know no greater bliss than to receive : But man feels the sublimer delight of giving. I am now a man, and the narrow joys of youth leave my heart vacant ; I pant for nobler occupations, and would seek to be happy by imparting felicity. Dependence is not the destination of man ; under his robuster arm, weakness should find protection ; yet what wretch blesses me for shelter ? As men, we should repay to others, what has been lent us in our weaker

weaker years ; yet in the whole circle of sentient beings I meet none to whom I add a moment's rapture, to whom I impart a ray of extacy, or who sympathises in my discontent with the eternal monotony of this life of nullity. I feel myself rich in energy, and repine that no one's stock of pleasures is augmented by my exertions. I come among men a mere spectator, not a partaker of their social joy ; conferring no benefits, exciting no gratitude. For me no contending friends employ the emulous cares ; on me rests no eye searching for its confident ; no arm stretches out to draw me into communion. I am saluted without warmth, invited without earnestness, received without pleasure, entertained without courtesy, and retire without notice. Scarcely
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is it remarked that I was present, or I am remembered to be more formally forgotten. Should any one take umbrage at my words or actions, in the wide universe of possibilities he can see no inducement to demand an explanation ; the slightest reference is too precious to be thrown away on me. No swelling bosom seeks to effuse itself into mine, no heart claims fellowship with my heart, no wretch sends forth a sigh to ask my compassion. Never dares my heart unfold itself ; no heart is responsive to its joys or sorrows. If I forget that I am not of the fraternity, and presume to communicate on equal terms, I am regarded as an impertinent ; if I come without an invitation, I am an intruder ; if I condole with the vexed, I am troublesome ; if I congratulate the fortunate, I

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am insolent. Thus, nothing to others, I am nothing to myself. Oh, my father ! 'tis a dreary disheartening thought to be of worth to no individual ! it makes a soil sterile, that might produce an hundred fold ; it spreads a waste round me immeasurable as eternity. I feel that in social utility consists the well being of social creatures : knowing this, to people this solitude is the burning desire of my soul, and a craving that stings me to distraction.

Pietro. Whims, vapours, Cousin, mere phantasies ! the fractious family of satiety and leisure !

Francesco. Oft have I asked myself what was wanting to me ; have stretched my discontent on the rack, to wring from it its instigators. Was I ill, your attention and skill drove away sickness ;

was

was I overcast with gloom, Benedetto's frolic mirth chased away melancholy and attuned me to gaiety. Yet are all human ills included in sickness and ill humour? can the heart of man be filled with elasticity of fame and light cheerfulness only? Were death this instant to snatch me from the world, what monument of my usefulness should I leave behind me? Could I promise myself remembrance, or regret? A day would slide over my tomb, and I should be forgotten; and I would fain live in the memory of some one while memory endured.

Pietro. Good Cousin, ever shall thou live embalmed in my remembrance.

Francesco. As what? 'tis not enough to be remembered, but to be remembered as the author and creator of happiness;

as tis not enough to live, but to live as the benefactor of a creature capable of feeling a benefit. To live thus in such an one, so that its felicity be mine, mine its; to be one and indivisible with it; to have a community of necessities and forces; to augment our joys by communication; to lighten our sorrows by division; to have the same end, and pursue it by the same means; to be one mind in two bodies! Ah! I am nothing alone, as the flint is nothing alone; as the steel is nothing alone; by co-operation only they beget fire. I am a seed in dry earth, and the genial shower is necessary to make me germinate and fructify.

Pietro. That fertilising rain shalt thou find in mine, and Benedetto's friendship.

Francesco.

Francesco. I fear, but a drizzling shower, moistening the surface of the soil without penetrating to the seed; and my clogged forces need the soaking streams of the autumnal equinox.

Pietro. Oh, Francesco! the benignant dews of friendship have made hearts of granite teem with deeds of virtue.

Francesco. Not long since I strolled with Benedetto to the beach, to enjoy the cool breath of evening, and a young maiden walked before us.—Her form! oh Creator of the world, how do thy works mock the feeble colours of language! let me not belie her beauty, by an unworthy portraiture. Her elegant limbs showed through her decent vestment, as the summer sun through the light clouds, that temper his glories

without defacing them ; veiled but not deformed ; their charms not impaired though diminished. Light as chearfulness, and airy as liberty, she tripped before, and my eyes spontaneous pursued her.

Pietro. Cousin, you grow tedious, and weary me.

Francesco. And is the ear of friendship so soon fatigued by the effusions of the friend ? Then, friendship, will not thy banks suffice my draughts on thee ! The livelong day has this girl listened attentively to my fond effusions ?

Pietro. As Benedetto does to thy tales, to forget them ; that he may ask, hast thou no new story, Francesco ?

Francesco. No, by the avenging sword of Heaven ; but as to the last injunctions

tions of an expiring Father. We were already near her, when the sound of our steps caught her ear, and she turned towards us : dazzled by her charms, Benedetto dropt on his knees, and exclaimed; ah, Francesco, the holy Virgin !

Pietro. Indeed ! and you, Cousin ?

Francesco. On me dawned the first day ; the universe invested itself in colour and radiance, and I became sensible of the worth of my existence : yet while joy streamed on my soul, I disdained every selfish feeling. Her glance ensnared all my faculties, my powers, and inclinations ; she robbed me of every thing at the moment she gave me all. I felt that she stole me from myself, and took from me even the consciousness of my individuality. The perception of my

nullity flashed on me, yet I felt no chagrin. The dearth of the past first became visible, yet I felt no regret: the smiling future consoled me, and chased the dreary retrospect from my mind.

Pietro. How habitual is enthusiasm to youth! not delirium more so to madness.

Francesco. Whether she took alarm I am ignorant, but she turned suddenly to the city. I followed her, as I should have done had raging Ætna poured its red torrents between us. A cavalier rushed towards her with an impetuosity, which terrified her; she flew towards an adjacent wood: he after her; I followed.

Pietro. And Benedetto?

Francesco. Translate a Pilgrim to the skies, and ask if he has been careful to bring.

bring his staff with him. The Cavalier threw his arms round the girl and dragged her roughly to the wood ; she cast a look to me for aid, which had drawn a fiend to the succour of a sinking angel. My strength seemed to dilate to omnipotence, my frame to gigantic dimensions. I rushed on the insolent assailant like a thunder bolt, beat him to the earth, and tearing his poignard from his grasp, bade him fly, if life were of any worth to him,

Pietro. And abashed and intimidated he fled. The circumstances were known to me, report was loud in your applause, and that you could suppress the action pleased me. He who wears the rose, which he has reared, in his bosom, soon commits it to corruption and decay ; and

an ostentatious display of our merits robs them of their sweet odour. Yet to divine the source of thy generous temerity I own exceeded my penetration.

Francesco. The suppliant look of beauty imploring succour, was the gladdening beam, the genial rain that vivified and called forth my powers.

Pietro. The look of Enemonde? ah Cousin, thy conscious cheeks blush confession. Can that look have taught thee love, and robbed Benedetto of thy friendship? A deeper crimson pleads guilty. I tremble for thee, Cousin; the eyes of women are delusive lights, that lure their credulous pursuer to destruction.

Francesco. Should the look of Enemonde have taught me love, what follows?

Pietro,

Pietro. You will have gorged a delicious bait, in which a barbed hook lies in ambush.

Francesco. Does love take captive to kill ?

Pietro. And if he but take captive, is not captivity a sufficient evil ?

Francesco. Voluntary subjection is the genuine liberty.

Pietro. In sovereignty there are no gradations ; love, if thy master, is absolute, or he is nothing.

Francesco. Government subsists but by opinion, and depends on the will of the subject ; either I love my slavery then, or I am free.

Pietro. Away with the dazzle of illustration : to the point, Cousin. Your heart prompts you to closer connections with your species, and Love and Friend-

ship are candidates for your preference ; both daughters of one mother---Self love. *That*, a young wanton girl, who skips over every obstacle, and throws herself into your arms ; *this*, a sedate matron, that with considerate steps advances to you, and will be wooed 'ere won. *That*, requires the sacrifice of your own judgment and will, and promises wonders of the Heaven with which she can reward you ; *this*, demands the same oblation, and is silent on the recompence. *That*, magnifies your hopes by gaudy descriptions of future felicity, and diminishes your enjoyment by raising expectation above reality ; or tantalizes you with a shew of delicacies, which exist but in appearance : *this*, promises nothing, for she desires not suitors of interested views,

views ; but, once gained, she proffers all she has, and a cornucopia is at her disposal. *That*, flaunts in silks and glitters in diamonds, but her whole wealth is collected on her exterior; *this*, affects a homely simplicity of habit, but her treasury is inexhaustible. You will prefer seductive Love, for your senses are your guides, and you would prefer the aromatic ciannamonto the medicinal coloquintida. The inconsiderate infant attracted by the splendor of gold despises the sober utility of iron ; and, fascinated with the gay hues of the garden, heeds not the precious profusion of Ceres. Friendship, busied with realities, neglects appearances ; Love is all parade and speciousness : Friendship, is fruit without flower ; Love, flower without fruit.

Francesco.

Francesco. Rather, Love is a blossom, which marriage ripens into fruit.

Pietro. Say, which marriage cankers and destroys ; marriage is the coffin, not the cradle, of love. Marriage kills Love, as food hunger, or knowledge curiosity : untasted we covet, enjoyed we loath and shrink from it. Nay, 'tis worse ; we are disgusted 'ere satisfied. Love spreads the festal board with sweetmeats and painted dainties, that cheat the eyes, promise pleasure to the palate, and content to the appetite. But the taste is cloyed 'ere hunger has subsided, and we quit the illusory banquet with dissatisfaction and disgust. You turn to the window, and to an object that affords an apt emblem of our subject. See over the liquid glass a gay galley skims in full bearing ! sportive as
the

the swallow, yet stately as the swan, she slides over the cerulean surface; her gaudy streamers float adown the playful breeze, her gilded stern towers above the waves that idly lash her helm, and her dashing oars insult the spumy waters. A gallant sight, Francesco, a heart-expanding spectacle! How thy eyes pursue the gay vessel, strain their vision to the utmost to prolong the pleasure, and still dwell on the point where distance veiled her from thee! And what procured thee this delightful spectacle? the 'extorted efforts of the miserable convicts. Think of their state in their gilded prison! What joys it them that, their limbs are rent asunder on a *gorgeous* rack, that conceals their tortures from the superficial gazer, and cheats him with a
face

face of splendor? Behold, Francesco, a portraiture of matrimony; not delineated by love, nor coloured by enthusiasm, but inspired by experience, and executed by impartiality.

Francesco. Colour is in the eye; all depends on the organ with which we view objects.

Pietro. Close by the shore, two fishermen in their little skiff watch their nets: a rush mat, their sail, serves to screen them from the torrid sun. Gazing admiration does not follow them to the mid sea, but neither does danger; and their light helm an infant's strength might manage. They toil for their own profit, not for the vanity or avarice of others. With what chearful diligence they mind their tackle! how fraternally they relieve
each

each other ! how exultingly they view their panting captives, and encourage themselves by the sight to hope a copious draught from their venture ! Should a wild whirlwind raise itself in the heavens, and with its weighty wings beat the sea into commotion, cast the boat into the great main, and repel the proud galley to the reefy shore, which, think you, the fishermen or the slaves, would be more strenuous to preserve their vessel ?

Francesco. The fishermen, doubtless--- At least, when the galley splits, the slaves regain their freedom.

Pietro. Take, then, without the disguise of similitude, my naked conceptions of marriage. Friendship, pure friendship, is the only salt that can preserve love from putridity: 'tis the sap and blood
that

that gives vitality to wedded affection, which without it is a leafless trunk, an inanimate corpse, destitute of soul and sentiment. And how oft hast thou insisted to me, that constraint is death to friendship, that the shadow of a yoke lies like lead on the neck of this benefactress of mortals ! and does not marriage impose the heaviest of yokes ? does it not constrain thee to perennial affection to thy wife, and thus annihilate free option, the basis of friendship ? What then supports your love ? Love too, the purest, most sentimental love, will delude, will deck the loveliest virgin with imaginary beauties : enjoyment and custom dissipate the enchantment, and reverse the charm. They wear off the gloss and bloom of novelty, pall the vivid hues ; and wherever they
pass,

pass, pollute and crush the once lovely flower. They discolour and aggravate every blemish of the wife, and contrast them with the perfections of the mistress, whom, in the infatuation of love, we fondly believed immaculate. Will Love continue the deposit, when he finds himself thus deceived in the depositary? Love cannot subsist without enthusiasm, nor enthusiasm without the persuasion of divinity; and if no man can be a hero to his valet, far less can a woman be a goddess to her husband? Nor is this all; gnawn by disappointment thou must conceal thy chagrin, and in default of solid happiness strive, impossible task! to retain the shadow of it, that thou may'st be accounted possessor of a jewel thou hast not. Marriage is the mystery of Freemasons,

which having learnt, we have learnt nothing; yet which we vaunt to the uninitiated to gain their admiration, or escape their contempt. 'Tis a purchase in which we have been deceived, but with which we must appear satisfied, to conceal our bad bargain. Marry and be convinced of my statements. Thou wilt then learn to submit thy man's reason to woman's caprice. Thou wilt learn to set thy heart and face at variance, and with bitter chagrin, and icy apathy in thy soul, to boast the perennial summer of love, and the ever-springing sweets of wedlock, lest thy friends should set thee up a mark for their derision, and say, thou art like the steed who wished to exchange his mossy bed for straw, and bought his litter with his freedom. Evils rise in such
hofts,

hofts, that, which first, which last to take,
 I know not. Thou wilt learn at the
 screaming whistle of thy mate to ply the
 laborious oar, and wind the reluctant rudder,
 that she may glide smoothly along
 in gay pomp, and flaunt her silken streamers,
 if thou wilt not endure the incessant scourge
 of her biting tongue, and find thy hoped couch
 of bliss a bench of excruciating torture;
 if thou wilt not that she let out her beauties
 to lavish gallants, and deck herself with the
 gains of impurity. Canst thou out-cringe the
 fa-traps of an oriental tyrant? Canst thou
 be the tool of his vile desires; or bend
 thyself into the horse-block of his lazy
 arrogance? All this could'st thou do, thy
 patience might sink under the whims of
 woman.

Francesco. Let me for a moment reheve you, Sir. Benedetto recited to me of late the rescript of the inspired Chrysoftom: “ What is woman but a gay weed, an enamelled serpent, a delicious poison, a disguised devil? what but the arch enemy of friendship, the death of tranquillity, the scourge of life, a domestic plague, a mortal fury?” From you he had the picture: perhaps you have read to-day Juvenal’s satire on the women of Rome?

Pietro. Wherever I read it, it was an extract from the volume of truth. Is it any diminution of a grievance, that all ages and nations have groaned under it. Wine caused the head-ache and nausea, long ’ere we felt its intoxicating effects; and

and it will cause them when we no longer feel its pernicious operation.

Francesco. And he, who would decry festivity, says only that wine occasions head-aches; not that it delights the taste and glads the heart of man. Are the infirmities of woman always disgusting maladies, their foibles odious sins? Cannot the husband overlook them as the friend; or does friendship purify from all imperfections?

Pietro. The friend remarks the faults of his friend to correct them; but to amend the failings of woman, would be to clear the sea beach from weeds, on which every fresh tide replaces them.

Francesco. A common-place proverb, my good Sir; and proverbs are counters, which, though we give and take them in

play, are not current in concerns of interest. Is man without faults ?

Pietro. His life is insufficient to amend them: and would'st thou become physician to another, while all thy art and care are wanted for thyself ?

Francesco. That piece recoils on yourself. But are the virtues of the sex no indemnification, or have women none ?

Pietro. A malicious question, Cousin, which I will answer as Heaven and my poor wits enable me. When I say, sickness is the attendant of inebriety, do I deny to wine restoring and exhilarating powers ? All the works of God have virtues, even toads to absorb poisons, and shall this master-piece of creation alone be destitute of them ? But the virtues of woman are antidotes to him, who is already poisoned,

ed,

ed, not preventatives against infection ; and why should'st thou poison thyself because thou hast at hand a remedy ? Fidelity, gentleness, patience and tenderness are the dowry which heaven has bestowed on woman ; but to prove the fidelity of thy wife thou must neglect her ; to ascertain her meekness, she must steep in the irrosive effusions of thy rage and austerity : misery must overwhelm thee, would'st thou certify her resignation ; consuming maladies corrupt thy juices, and sap thy strength 'ere her tender sollicitudes can serve thee. And would'st thou lame thyself to find use for a crutch, or build thy house on a marsh that thou might'st bring cramps and props into employment ?

Francesco. Do you then esteem the foundation of every marriage a marsh ?

Pietro. Till you name me a sure basis on which nuptial felicity may be erected. Are the excellences of the mind the ground of thy passion? Know you *now* the true from the counterfeit? Can you determine in the glitter of distance the genuine brilliant from the ignobler chrystal? Marriage gives you closer inspection, but *then* you have bought the stone and must abide your purchase. Or do'st thou build on personal beauty, on fond caresses, and the strict embrace of consummated love, the stability of thy affection? But these, while they feed the senses, starve the soul; and enjoyment blunts the edge of their favour. Is man formed to know no change, or will Hymen variegate his gifts with eternal diversity? Wilt thou never pant to press the velvet lip of another and more captivating

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ing fair, when thy wife's are become trite and stale to thee? Oh, Francesco, thou know'st not the heart of man, that aggregate of contrarieties, that seat of intestine war and civil discord! we enjoy but to find in our enjoyments materials for new wishes, to engender and multiply desires on them. Smite off a head of the Hydra, and two shall rise upon thee: spin out thy soul in redoubling passions; be consumed by the brood of lust thou hast begotten, thy cravings shall encrease by gratification, and thy poverty be augmented by opulence.

Francesco. And can I never chain my constancy to one woman?

Pietro. Yes; from gratitude. But would'st thou plunge mid the liquid mountains of the agitated ocean, to owe thy

thy life to a preserving hand, and be the slave of obligation ever after ?

Francesco. And if, regardless of your representations, and of the invectives of the holy Chrysostom, the sweet intoxication of love should hurry me to dare every danger, and neglect every consideration ; to dig for the precious metal, heedless of chilling damps, suffocating vapours, and crushing ruins ; if I persist to taste the tempting fruit, which you labour to represent so noxious : what then ?

Pietro. Then, Cousin, I would cast thee from my heart, wer't thou the ark and palladium of my prosperity : I would despair and die, for that my benefits had not moved thee to more gratitude, and secured thy friendship to my nephew.

Unfortunate

Unfortunate boy ! to strangers, intent but
 to enrich themselves by thy plunder, must
 I commit thee : to robbers must I leave
 thee, attracting rapacity by thy wealth,
 and emboldening it by thy weakness. Like
 the shade of an unburied wretch, my soul
 shall flit around thee ; strive to warn thee
 of the thick dangers that lye in ambush
 for thee, and find my efforts ineffec-
 tual : attempt to tear the meretricious
 mask of Vice from her abhorred visage,
 yet see thee clasp the specious monster in
 thy arms ; and plunge at last, desperate,
 into hell, with thy corrupted spirit. Oft
 have I, deluded dotard, thought that he,
 whom consanguinity called to the charge,
 would be a father to my Benedetto.
 Why, Francesco, do'st thou strike from
 me the last support of my declining exist-
 ence,

ence, and tear from me the pillow on which I could have expired with resignation and chearfulness ?

Francesco. My father ; the husband does not annihilate the kinsman. Enemonde should hold divided empire with Benedetto in my care and affections.

Pietro. Fond error ! Enemonde would tyrannise over all thy¹ faculties : her smile would draw thee from my poor boy, were he involved in flames, or whelming in the great waters : *her* wishes would send thee to the four quarters of the globe, to feed her caprice with baubles. What then will become of thy neglected Cousin ? he will riot uncultivated and unregarded, and wilden in body and in soul. Thou wilt extend thy views into futurity far over my poor Benedetto, or use his possessions

possessions as a stepping stone to advance thee in thy projects : should thy wife bear thee children, he will not have a corner in thy heart left to him. Go, ungrateful Francesco, to thy Enemonde ; her embrace will repay thee, the loss of my friendship ; her lucid eyes swimming in voluptuous joy will teach thee to deride my tears of anguish for my hapless nephew ; her rapturous murmurs indemnify thee for the dying curses, which a despairing old man shall mutter against thee. May Heaven never fulfil them, though thou art mine and Benedetto's murderer !

Francesco. Cease, my father, to anticipate your curses !

Pietro. Go, exult with thy paramour, at thy barbarous desertion of me ; I will
change

change the name of my house, and disclaim thy affinity : Benedetto shall seek, in the mortifications and chagrins of a cloister, sanctuary against vice, and monks shall inherit my ample possessions.

Francesco. My benefactor, my father, torture not thyself with these fears : I only said were it so ; but it is not so.

Pietro. It is not ? Francesco, wert thou my declared heir, I should think thou meant to snap the strings of life by this sudden transition from the relaxation of despair, to the intensest rapture. It is not so ? Thou art not infected with love ? yet why the glowing cheek and suspended respiration ?

Francesco. The eyes of Enemonde had kindled love in me ; but our indigence, my gratitude to you, and affection to Benedetto,

nedetto, suppress it. Your discourse reminded me of my recent struggles, and shame died my face with blushes.

Pietro. May I believe this, Francesco?

Francesco. Let my words be registered in Heaven!

Pietro. Infirm and timid age is by nature incredulous. Good kinsman, wilt thou confirm my reliance on thy assurances by an oath which I will dictate to thee? Wilt thou swear never to desert Benedetto, or by a marriage transfer thy affections from him to another object?

Francesco. Never to transfer my affections by marriage? never? never? *I will.*

Pietro. Follow me into the library; there, before the crucifix, to swear by the redeeming grace of Heaven ——

Francesco.

Francesco. Never to desert him, never by a marriage to transfer my affections to another ?

Pietro. Ay : why do'st thou reiterate this to thyself ?

Francesco. Shall I not examine what I pledge myself to perform ? So shall I not pledge myself above my powers of accomplishing. An engagement built on scrupulous hesitations, stands on the firmest basis.

Pietro. True, true : wise was thy reiteration, good Francesco. Swear also to conceal what I will unveil to thee, in the darkest recesses of thy soul, and to keep thy tongue ever ignorant of it.

Francesco followed the old man into the library, and there swore before the image of salvation, to contract no marriage

riage during the life of Benedetto ; to be a friend and a guardian to him, and to shroud in secrecy, inscrutable as the ways of avenging Heaven, what Barliardo should communicate to him.

Scarcely was the awful attestation completed, when the old man, elate with joy and triumph, prest the youth to his bosom, and murmured in accents, interrupted by the swell of exultation, how, how can I reward thee, kind Francesco ? thy first oath grafts, in Benedetto's redemption, new life on my withered stock. Far, far recede the killing fears that I should leave him helpless and alone to the mercy of rapacious man, that carnivorous savage, that hungry cannibal, whose friendship or enmity is alike fatal to body and soul. Now he is secured to

me, now he is secured to *thee*, Heavenly Father, since Francesco is secured to *him*.

This, kind restorer of my sickening tranquillity, be the thanks of my lips : thou hast sacrificed to my felicity and Benedetto's welfare, a first unaccomplished love, to which thou wert fastened by the strong chains of uncloyed desire and ungratified curiosity. Thou hast sacrificed it in the heat of youth, and in the summer solstice of a tropical temperament. Gratitude has not stores to repay thee, but what it can, it shall ; follow me.

He seized Francesco's hand, and sliding back a pannel of the wainscot, lead the astonished youth into a spacious chamber beneath the floor. A white curtain divided it, which Pietro having drawn aside,

aside, he turned to Francesco, who stood petrified with surprise, and bade him survey the inestimable treasure which awaited him. On the floor of the apartment, which was hung with sable tapestry, he observed three circles formed by fillets of parchment, stained with mysterious characters, diagrams, and figures of monsters more hideous than ever issued from the womb of nature. The outer circle was supported on twelve crosses of the sacred palm; the inner, on the same number of crosses of thorn; the middle rested on twelve of laurel. Within these circles lay, in an oblong quadrangle, a white dragon, with golden crest and scarlet wings, holding in his clasp a yellow lizard; and in an oval inscribed parallel to the door of the vault, was a triangle con-

taining the name of the Myſterious Omnipotent, ſurrounded by three flames. Over the vertex of the triangle reſted on two croſſed bones a human ſkull, from the eye cavities of which projected a naked ſword and a branch of palm, and in the crown was fixed a croſs, round which twined a ſilver ſerpent. Behind theſe ſacred barriers, which the combined force of Erebus dares not invade, ſtood an altar compacted of human bones, and ſupported by four monſtrous forms, for which language affords no name. Seven candleſticks bearing high yellow tapers of wax, formed a heptagon round the altar and circles; and miſt theſe ſtood four terrific forms, bearing diadems and ſceptres, and clad reſpectively in flame-coloured, azure, blood-red, and cerulean robes; emblem-

emblematic of the elementary governors. An enneagon of holy vessels, crosses, chalices, skulls and bones, swords, palm-branches, and doves wings, inclosed the whole mysterious apparatus. On the altar lay the book of incantation unfolded, and seven large seals were suspended to it, by flesh-coloured fillets.

Thy astonishment (so Pietro broke silence) suppresses thy enquiries, and stifles curiosity; I should plunge thee deeper in confusion, were I to reply to all that thy dumb amazement asks: I have promised thee a recompense; now hear its nature and its worth.

Know then, I have long been what envy and suspicion represented me, a student and an adept in magic. The possession of this precious volume gives me sove-

reignty over the invifible legions, impowers me to break every restraint which holds them viewlefs to human fight, in the vaft worlds of air, the fpacious tracts of water, the wide regions of earth, and the ample realms of elemental fire : this treasury of wifdom teaches me to cite them to my prefence by fummons they dare not difobey, and to bind them to my will by injunctions, which to their proudeft and moft powerful prince are inviolable. Yet, convinced as I am, beyond the reach of doubt, of my dominion over the invifible world, I own that I have never yet put it to the proof by any actual fummons : whether reftained by the timidity of tremulous age, or withheld by the want of any adequate infligation. On thee, my fon, I have caft
my

my eyes, for a fit auxiliary in this great undertaking; for thee I have with my own hands fabricated the form of Uric, king of the morning; of Paymon, king of the evening; of Maymon, king of the noon; and of Egyn, king of midnight: for thee I have constructed the circles, and erected the altar; for thee alone have I laboured. I am rich beyond my own wishes, or the wants real and imaginary of my nephew, and the torpid blood of age knows not the fierce passions to which this empire over the ministers of creation might be serviceable. I have confined thee by the short tether of entire dependance on my will, to preclude any transgressions from purity and virtue; either of which had disqualified thee for commerce with the spiritual world. For, know my

son, that the invisible people obey his mandates alone, who never, in the arms of a wanton, sucked the luscious juice of lascivious pleasure, nor sullied his soul with the blotches of impurity. Deaf are their ears to the voice of him, who has stooped even to connubial pleasures ; the call of him, who has laid an injurious hand on his neighbour's goods, who has neglected the rites of devotion, or the duties of charity, who has trampled on his plighted oath, or shed the blood even of a condemned or proscribed criminal, exasperates them to horrible vengeance. Learn now why I wished to controul thy will, to deprive thee of what thou possessedst in expectation ; 'twas to return thee thy will regenerated to rectitude, to endow thee with possessions which thy fancy in its wildest dreams

dreams never aspired to. Henceforth beat down every limitation to thy avarice or ambition; all the treasures of the earth are at thy disposal, since their guardians are but as my stewards.

At the sound of this adjuration, the lynx-eyed Aziel brings thee, swift as thy thoughts explode in words, the close concealed gold of the miser. The treasures of cloisters, and the exchequers of kings, stand open to him. Thy will points, and Aziel brings thee thy wishes, though they were fixed on the summits of the hills that sustain heaven, or buried in the central caverns, where the subterranean fire collects for eruption.

Instant as the struck flint emits fire, or as blood follows the inciding lancet, Aniquel and Marbuel, the spirits of the
earth,

earth, execute thy half formed purpose. They empty the hills of their fossile treasures, and uncloſe to thee the ſealed ſecrets of nature. They give thee inſight into the minds of men, whether preſent, or abſent; render every language thy mother tongue, and tame the brute creation to thy ſervices, whichſoever element their habitation. They lead thee through the bowels of nature, and lay all the healing influence of the vegetable world at thy command.

Obedient to thy evocation, Aziabel, the ſpirit of the waters, drags the great deep, to enrich thee with its engulphed treasures. Pearls and corals he ſtrews under thy feet, and brings thee every marine production of the unfathomable ocean.

If

If thy ambitious pride pant for the acclamations of the people, or the careffes of the great ; is it thy wifh, 'mid the hurricane of popular commotion, to be hailed the father of thy country, and the affertor of freedom ; beats thy heart to feek the wreath of glory among the thronging deaths of battle ; fpeak but thy will to Machiel, and nature and chance fhall confpire to fulfill thy defires.

Would'ft thou that thy memory be a library of all fciences and tongues, that every province of art own thy fway and pay thee tribute, that by thy discoveries error fhould be driven from every faftnefs, by thy acquifitions every chafm in human knowledge be filled up, every intricacy be unravelled, that by thy fkill

every Torso be restored, every Venus completed ; Baruel shall make thee the organ of wisdom, the instrument of the arts ; and sages shall enrich their minds with the lees of thy effusions, artists gild their names with thy dross.

Cast thy eyes over thy treasures, and indulge thy pride in computing how thy power confines on Omnipotence. These six spirits bring thee fortune and glory ready coined ; the seventh, Mardiel, conveys to thee the bullion of every happiness, and leaves thee the exalted labour of stamping it thyself.

Art thou overwhelmed, my son, by the floods of fortune that pour upon thee, that all thy faculties are drowned in amazement, and thou stand'st speechless and stiff as one without life ?

Francesco.

Francesco. I live ; but does not the lunatic live also ? I feel ; but so does the dreamer in his wildest visions : I move ; but so does the delirious noctambule. Call me son, shake me to my reason, propose a riddle to me, that I may certify myself my understanding has not abandoned me.

Pietro. Let this embrace chase doubt from thee ; this salutation exorcise from thee fear. Tell me, son, what key opened to thee this vault of mystery, this arsenal of power, this treasury of happiness ?

Francesco. An oath ! ha, and is not reason then a cheat ; nor memory a liar ! Wealth, wisdom, fame are my vassals, the elements my freeholds, vast nature
but

but my storehouse ! Are all these thy donations ?

Pietro. With all these I endow thee. All these stand at thy use, when prayers, abstinence and vigils, have purified thee for commerce with the unfulfilled spirits.

Francesco. And, I doubted thy affection, my father ! and all this thou hast given me ? What could move thee to such lavish communication ? what could my gratitude offer worthy a price so enormous ?

Pietro. Benedetto's welfare, which in thy keeping is more secure than in chests of iron. When I buy his happiness with all I possess, I am a gainer by the bargain. Now, my son, repose thyself ; go to thy couch ; if not to sleep,

to

to meditate in the still solitude of darkness. In the night of the visitation of the virgin, I will summon a spirit ; be it thine to chuse among them.

Francesco. And 'tis mine to choose among them ! mine to decide between such mighty candidates for preference ! Be it then the spirit of instruction.

Pietro. Wife Francesco ! high in my esteem, as dear to my affections, thy choice merits all I can bestow on thee, and all shalt thou have. Now retire, my son, to repose.

Francesco retired to his chamber, but sleep kept away from him as from the youthful bridegroom on the night that consummates his fiercest wishes. As easy had it been for the shipwrecked mariner to sleep on the shattered plank,
which

which alone supports him on the wild waves that yawn for him, as for the young Barliardo to win a momentary slumber from the crowd of cares that beset him. He fancied himself crushed under the weight of Pietro's treasures, like the Tarpeian maid beneath the Gaulish oblations ; and he panted and heaved under the oppression of imaginary terrors. His disordered brain raised a hundred rapacious phantoms around him, who all strove to seize his treasures ; and, till he had chased away these visionary robbers, he could not lie on his precious heaps, and brood over his wishes in quiet. Then he remembered that he was not yet master of his expectations, and all his wealth sunk from his sight, through the leaky vessel of uncertainty. New obstacles
seemed

seemed to interpose ; and by murder's horrid path only could he arrive at his object. Uncertainty at last cleared up, his terrors were dissipated by the gay illuminations of Hope, and his heart reposed in confidence of his security.— Here flashed on him the enquiry, to what use he should apply his riches ? and Love was ready to answer, What jewel is there so precious as Ene-monde ?

The man, who, catching at a supposed variegated fillet, finds a serpent in his grasp ; the alchymist, who, after a life's labours, finds his transmuted gold base metal, starts not with such wild surprise at the chilling discovery, as did the terrified Francesco, when he found the worthlessness of his acquisition. Ha !

H exclaimed

exclaimed he, convulsed with the sharp pang of disappointment, and have I sold my living treasure, my charming Ene-monde, for senseless gold, and visionary phantoms of ambition and vanity ? Have I bartered thy love-attuned accents for the shrill chink of zecchins ? Have I paid the pearls and rubies of thy cheeks for the yellow gleam of gold, and given thy fervid fondness for the favour of an old peevish miser ? Wretched dupe ! infatuated bubble ! And have I received the recompence of this inestimable sacrifice ? Have I security that I shall ever receive it ? Why does Pietro give me but expectation, and reserve possession for his nephew ? Hell and horror ! means he to cheat me with an empty delusion ? Am I neglectful of my own, to

watch over the boy's happiness, and find deception and disappointment the sole reward of my solicitude? What certainty have I that spirits own allegiance to necromancy, or that they will obey his summons? What certainty has he himself? Why did he never call them to his presence, or make his darling nephew monarch of the invisible world? Why did he not, if he had the power, appoint one of these superior beings, in a human form, to be the guardian angel of his favoured boy? Benedetto! no care but for Benedetto! Curses on the intruding boy, and on the father that begot him, and intercepted from me Pietro's riches! His life is the sole bar that divides me from affluence and Enmonde.

Back from this spot were an abyss behind me : 'tis a thought furrounded with horrors, from which the most murderous heart must revolt, astonished and petrified. Avaunt, fiend, that drags me on to infernal machinations ! Burst, my soul, through this world of atrocity, into purer regions, and bleach thyself from the fins its pitchy air has polluted thee with.——Ha ! the close contrivance opens before me ; I penetrate the insidious snare—Were the invisible people my ministers, would not Benedetto's life be in my hands ? And would the linc-eyed Pietro entrust to my care his precious treasure, and secure me impunity for the embezzlement of it ? No : infamy or dotage would be more cautious ; and I only am the fool. Artful old man,

thy

thy frauds had lulled my vigilance and suspicions to sleep : but they wake, renewed and redoubled.—And, grant his promises valid ; say, the lords of the elements are his vassals, and I the heir of his dominion in its full extent, what were the throne to me, which I could not share with Enemonde ? Yet is there no ransom which can release me from slavery to an oath ? What aperitive like gold ? And then would not the whole world be my treasury ? Stay——Enemonde, if not my consort, may be my paramour ; and my gold shall charm the dragon—virtue. Can the mercenary blessing of a lazy priest confer connubial felicity ? Can it fix beauty, or preserve health and gaiety ? Can marriage-certificates render her lips more sweet, my

embrace more ardent? And, if not, what have I to do with marriage?— Yet, has not Enemonde's virtue withstood the temptation of gold?—O ! oft, oft ! And can a time have come, when my angel's virtue can be odious to me ? Should Horatio's mother die, and he offer his hand to Enemonde, vengeance might instigate, and passion allure, her to bestow the casket which contains my happiness on him ; and I must be witness of their mutual felicity ; must sicken at the joy and tenderness that irradiate their happy features, and madden when the sight of their laughing issue reminds me of the raptures which produced them.—No ; rather than this, let Hell arm itself against me with every instrument of damnation !

Oh,

Oh, what dæmon infatuated me, when
 I bound my soul with this accursed oath ?
 What could tempt me to turn a fiery
Phlegethon between myself and *Elysium* ?
 Never to marry during the life of Bene-
 detto !---And is the boy immortal or
 invulnerable ? No, Pietro, insidious ca-
 joler, I tell thee, no ; my arm should
 reach his heart, though encircled with
 the wings of cherubim. And retribution
 sanctifies the blow. I strike but at his
 life ; thou hast aimed at my happiness.
 Angels, why forbade ye not this incon-
 siderate vow, which cuts me off from fe-
 licity, and throws me upon demons for
 deliverance ? And must I choose between
Enemonde and eternal salvation ? Gra-
 cious Heaven, thou canst not impose on
 feeble man such heart-rending alterna-

tives ! All thy penalties cannot be capital ! An erected temple, an endowed monastery, can efface crime, and bring eternal justice to composition. And Pietro's coffers contain the materials of ten St. Peter's. Remorse, lull thyself to sleep, nor let thy puling cries disturb me.--- Heaven will not shut its golden gates against my atoning spirit ; and Enemonde has vowed to open her arms for me, though sin had dyed my soul in her own fable.——Ha, piteous Hell, with what a thought hast thou inspired me ! Black night, thou wert its mother ; and a devil, footy as thyself, has begotten it ! Mature, nursling of Hell, my happiness grows with thee !

Cousin ! Cousin ! (exclaimed with sudden outcry Benedetto, who now
waked

waked in a transport of terror) are you there?---Come cloſer to me, and ſhelter me in your boſom. I dreamt that a huge dragon was about to devour me, and that you came and ſlew the monſter, and reſcued your poor Benedetto from his fury; a thouſand times I thank you.

Franceſco. Why thank me, couſin? Thank the dream, which brought my image to your reſcue; I knew not of your danger, and could not therefore relieve you from it.

Benedetto. Who elſe, then, could it be? I have no friend but you, couſin, who could have reſcued me from ſuch a monſter. I know no good folks but you, and uncle, and Enemonde; and uncle is too old, and Enemonde too weak, to kill ſo large a dragon: had not you ſaved

saved me, he had swallowed me alive.---
 Come, dear cousin, let me kiss you;
 take me to your arms, that I may sleep
 safe from every danger: let ugly dreams
 then come as they will; you are with
 me, and I defy them.

Francesco. No, no!

Benedetto. Pray do; and I will ask my
 uncle, in the morning, to give you a
 whole handful of gold, that you may buy
 a fine gown for Enemonde.

Francesco. Harkee, boy; speak a word
 to thy uncle of Enemonde, and——

Benedetto. No, indeed, I won't; in-
 deed, I never have. Don't be angry,
 Francesco; but come and lie by me,
 that these frightful dreams may not
 molest and terrify me.

Francesco. Go to sleep, I tell you, and
 be quiet.

Benedetto.

Benedetto. I can't, but at your side.

Francesco. I have a fever on me, and you might catch it by lying with me.

Benedetto. Poor cousin, and are you ill? Then I am sure I cannot sleep; I will sit up and watch you.

Francesco. Stay where you are, or I will never take you with me to Enemonde. Go to sleep, if you would not put me in a passion.

Benedetto. Nay, good cousin, don't be angry; that will but make you worse; I cannot sleep; but I will not fret and tease you; only call me when you want any thing.

And the gentle boy watched the whole night with Francesco. Oft he asked him, how he found himself? And the answer was ever, Be quiet, and sleep.

sleep. Scarcely did the first gleam of morn peep into the chamber, ere the fond child stept lightly to Francesco's bed, and seeing his eyes red and wildly staring, his cheeks and forehead flushed with feverish fire, and damp with morbid moisture, said, with the very voice of compassion, Indeed, my poor Francesco, you are very—very ill; your hair is dripping wet, your face red as fire, and your eyes are starting from their lids. You must have the physician, or you will die, and I with you.

Francesco. Hast thou so much affection for me, boy?

Benedetto. Yes, indeed I have; much more than for uncle.

Francesco. And would thy love for me hold after his death?

Benedetto.

Benedetto. Indeed and indeed, it would, my Francesco. And then thy Ene-monde shall live and sleep with us, and share in all our pleasures. I do so love her, find such delight in sitting in her lap, and sleeping on her bosom; and when she kisses me, I do feel so—I don't know how, as it were !

Francesco. Better and better ! Will my cup never be deadly enough, that new poisons must still be pouring into it ? Of what materials, Hell, wilt thou next make my miseries, when children become my rivals ?

Benedetto. What do you mean ? Holy Mother, what has come to you ?

Francesco. I shall find ways though, to quench the flames that fasten on my little tenement, or I will perish in them !

Benedetto.

Benedetto. Francesco ! Francesco ! My God, what has seized you ? You do so clasp your teeth, and your eyes shoot such living sparkles——What, what, my poor cousin, is the matter with you ?

Francesco. Away ! boy, the fit seizes me.—Away, I say.

Benedetto. I go to bring you a cup of wine, to moisten your parched lips, and cool the burning thirst that rages in you. Do not die ; for my sake, do not die, my good Francesco.

——And the affectionate boy hurried on his cloaths, and ran, with fond solicitude, to procure relief for one who was machinating his murder.

Francesco. Down, devil ! Can I think of using the arms of Hell against this spotless angel ? No, though furies were

to goad me on, I would advance no further in my infernal purpose. Yet Enemonde never mine, while he lives ; nay, his, perhaps ! Eternal damnation ! how Hell has enclosed me on all sides !

He threw on his cloaths, muttering curses, which demons had scrupled to fulfil, and rushed out of the house, into an adjacent forest,* to hide his agitation from the face of day, and lose himself in the impenetrable gloom of the lofty pines and expanded cedars.

On he drove through the dark umbrage, and carried with him the same relentless furies, through every winding grove and tangled thicket. Oft, consumed with inward anguish, and panting with fatigue, he would have thrown himself on the earth, for a moment's repose ;

pose ; but sulphurous flames seemed to burst from the millocks, and forbid the resting-place to him. An invisible power seemed to urge him on, spite of his reluctance. When he stopt, the ground quaked under his feet, and the forest groaned around him. Oft he turned, and looked towards Salerno with wishful glances ; but fiends appeared to peep through the morning's misty curtain ; and, shuddering, he hurried on. At length he reached the sea, which now shewed glorious with the liquid gold of the rising luminary ; a wide expanse of polished azure, here and there broken by the gambols of the marine people, or curled by the pure breath of the morning. He mounted a cliff, that stretched beyond its base, over the water, and surveyed
the

the fluid below, where he thought Death opened his arms to shelter him from misery, and a voice cried to him, to throw himself on the bed of rest, and escape the turmoils of Passion, the seductions of Hope, and the sharp pangs of Disappointment. Despair benumbed the strings of life ; his eyes gushed with the scalding tears of feverish passion ; the sea, sky, and rocks vanished from his sight, and his limbs tottered under their burthen. His situation was critical : Nature sunk beneath the unremitting persecution she had suffered, and the soul seemed dubious whether to stay, or to quit its mansion for ever. Life at last gained the ascendancy ; the explosion of the morning gun, in an adjacent vessel, called him to himself ; and, re-

covering recollection and strength, he shook off a trance, which might have terminated in eternal torpor.

With melancholy and tardy steps, he returned to the city, and in his way encountered a young cavalier, richly arrayed, and followed by a numerous retinue. Francesco raised his eyes, and knew him to be Horatio Orfalini; and seeing a violet-coloured glove, which himself had given to Enemonde, in the cap of the cavalier, felt the flames of jealousy rekindled in his bosom, and all his torments renewed. Burning with revenge, he glared menaces of destruction after the knight, and essayed to bid him halt, and restore the precious trifle: but he was incapable of articulating a sound, which in the least resembled a human

human accent. The swift steed of Horatio soon bore him from the sight of Francesco, who, bursting with rage, and overcome with despair, reeled and dropt on the causeway. Wild and frantic, he started up, and flew to the cot of Enemonde, into which he burst like a robber or an invader. • There he found the sick father in his bed, and, asking for his daughter, was told she was at matins. He bade the old man adieu, in a tone that had suited a denunciation of eternal perdition, and stealing into the chamber of Enemonde, rummaged the chests which contained her little wardrobe.— Here meeting but a single glove like that which decked the cap of Orsalini, he snatcht it, vehement as a lionsess recovers her ravished whelps from the

hunter, and, having torn it with his teeth, in a transport of rage and jealousy, thrust it violently into his bosom. Every thing conspired to lacerate and rankle his wounded mind, and the fever of his soul was incensed to insanity. He returned to Barliardo's habitation, passed unconsciously through the garden and courts, and ran with breathless precipitation to the monastery of St. Oliveta.

There lived brother Hilario, a friend of his father ; a man, who, by his single virtue, had redeemed Gomorrha from almighty vengeance. He alone, of the whole fraternity, thought a rational belief could not be displeasing to the Divinity ; and, stripping Religion of the fantastic ornaments in which Fanaticism and Priestcraft had enveloped her, viewed
and

and shewed her in her own shape, how simple, and how lovely. He was a priest single in his profession, who thought benefits to the living, more pious than masses for the dead ; that the friend of the social charities was the truest servant of Religion ; and that the institutor of one manufactory deserved more applause than the founder of an hundred cloisters. His maxim was, that the duty of priests was to guide, not drive, their flocks to grace ; to be the model of integrity, and mirror of purity to the people ; not the Procrustes standard of their faith, and tyrants of opinion.

The venerable monk met the salutation of Francesco with a warmth that spoke no common affection, and, ob-

serving the ravages which the fierce fire of passion had made in his countenance, and the strong emotions that shook his soul, enquired, with a benignity of condolence that poured balm into the youth's lacerated mind, what boisterous passion had destroyed his serenity, and ruffled the wonted smoothness of his brow ?

Francesco. Some days since, my revered father, in a company of young men, the discourse lighted on the existence of spirits, and the possibility of their appearance in visible forms, in obedience to certain modes of evocation. The greater part of the assembly voted for or against the probability of this proposition, as fancy and prejudice moved them ; the young Pandoli, and myself
alone,

alone, spoke decisively on the subject : he in support, I in denial, of it. Whether possessed by the demon of contradiction, or inspired by some slight persuasion of the truth of my negative, I withstood and repelled his arguments with firmness, and was silenced only by his reference to facts, and his vehemently-attested relations. Though my reason was confounded and staggered, my pride would not permit me to concede ; and I appealed to you, reverend father, confident that your opinion would sanction mine. Here again Pandoli maintained the contrary, and offered me a wager of fifty zecchins, that you believed the possibility and reality of their commerce with men. I accepted the bet, though I can scarcely call an obolus my own ; for,

persuaded that my opinion was your's, I defied the chance of all loss. My security however soon vanished before the risk I had incurred, and the apprehension of being debtor for a sum so much above all I possess has tost me in such restless anguish, that scarcely could my frame sustain the incessant agitation. 'We had named a day on which to seek decision from you, but unable to wait the close of the tardy period I come to learn your opinion now, and complete my despair, or regain my tranquillity.

Hilario. My son, 'tis the character of rash youth to be certain where certainty is unattainable, till death has removed the mist of mortality from our nature. Presumptions are on this point our only substitutes

substitutes for demonstration, and presumptions alone can I afford you.

Francesco. And you do hold it possible that superior spirits may incarnate themselves in sensible substance at our command ?

Hilario. I hold the contrary ; but you start back, and the wild fire of your cheeks gives place to a deadly paleness. Is this a signal of exultation, this the colour of joy ? how say you ?

Francesco. May not fear and delight, in the common shock of surprise, assume a similarity of appearance ? shattered as my frame has been by terror, even joy oppresses it. But the reasons, Father, the causes, the proofs !

Hilario. Proofs, I have none against the probability of supernatural appearances ;

ances; I can produce but presumptions.

Francesco. Only presumptions?

Hilario. My Son, thy face is no interpreter of thy mind, or Terror has fixed its iron reign over thy features for ever. Even now that thy wager is secured to thee, Despair seems to stamp thy brow with her own image.

Francesco. Anxiety has made way for sickness, and I feel myself bend beneath her potent influence. But proceed, Father, and as far as they go, unfold your reasonings.

Hilario. My first step then towards the conclusion, that spirits have no sensible commerce with man, is the enquiry, to what purpose should the communication be established? to heap benefits on man?

he

he needs not their gifts ; bounteous nature has been sufficiently liberal to him ; nor would heaven with partial hand commit such vast powers to *those*, who neither wiser nor better than others have but penetrated into the dark caverns of necromancy and discovered the forms of evocation.* If you say to perform services for the human race ; I reply, their powers are their best vassals. If to warn us of calamities ; let Prudence be on the scout for these enemies of our nature, and we need not fear that afflictions shall take us unprepared for them. To discover treasures to mortals ? industry is the best diviner's wand, and diligence will wrest its prize from obstacles, which to indolence are the tremendous monsters of fable. Can it be to exempt us from
the

the labour of exertion, to render us rich, wise, and honoured without the toil of effort? Were our faculties and talents given us to rust in inaction? Say 'twas to dispel the mists of distance, and illumine the senses of futurity? Heaven has wisely veiled them from our view, nor suffered them to overcast the joys of the passing moment. My Son what harm has my hempen girdle done you, that you rend it with your teeth thus?

Francesco, Father! would to Heaven 'twere the thread of my life! I had soon released myself then from this dungeon of misery. But proceed.

Hilario. Should you suppose, that the object of their interference is to injure mortals; then all my experience, all my reasonings rise in arms against the blasphemous

phemous conjecture. Never can eternal goodness dig pitfalls in the path of the blind.

Francesco. Father have you ever known love?

Hilario. Ask me if I have ever known thirst?

Francesco. Can Passion invade the walls of convents, or his shafts pierce the robe of a monk?

Hilario. What mean you? your wager went to my understanding, not to my sensibility; seek then information from my head, not my heart.

Francesco. Answer, Father, answer.

Hilario. Do you love then?

Francesco. Answer, Father, oh answer me, if you would not see me expire in the anguish of expectation. What has love been to you?

Hilario. My conductor to this cell.

Francesco. Do you bless or curse its guidance ? Answer monk ; nor torture me with this delay.

Hilario. Francesco, my Son, what wild passion glares such phrenzy from thy eyes ? a tremor runs through all thy limbs, and scarcely is thy soul contained in thy body.

Francesco. Oh answer instant, Father, rack me not with suspense so excruciating. What is love to man ?

Hilario. What the first draught of air is to the infant ; a pledge and earnest of existence.

Francesco cast himself on the neck of his venerable friend, printed warm kisses on his benignly-beaming countenance, and clasped him with fervour in his arms.

Hilario.

Hilario. Gracious heaven; my son, what impetuous passion urges thee?

Francesco. Nothing, nothing! you were saying that the interposition of spirits in the affairs of men---Proceed, I pray you.

The good monk shook his head expressively, and resumed his discourse. Let us suppose however, that spirits may be employed in the service of man; we have still to ask, what powers can constrain them to appear in visible shapes at the summons of a mortal. Supernatural ones? Whence shall we procure them? Will human means suffice? What! to rule supra-human powers? And will these lords of the elements, these arch-potentates of nature, crouch at the empty jargon of a feeble mortal, fetch and
carry

carry for his amusement, and pander for his inordinate desires ? Oh arrogance and folly of man ! who, formed but a point in creation, fondly fancies himself the centre to which all beings tend ; and blind to his insignificance conceives the universe constructed for his mansion, and peopled for his service. Phantasy imagined spirits, Fear beheld them, and Imposture and Vanity glorified themselves with the pretended power of raising them at will.

Francesco. Fraudulent or credulous Pietro, expect the punishment of thy treachery, or thy folly ! Farewell, father !

The frantic youth rushed in an agony of rage and desperation from the cell, and the astonished monk gazed after him in speechless terror.

Perturbation

Perturbation is a bad guide: Francesco, instead of passing through the court to the street, entered unconsciously the church, and urged headlong on till the wall terminated his career ; and then with equal precipitation and inadvertence he was returning. The lofty organ struck up a solemn peal, and the sacred harp was touched responsive to its majestic intonation. The deep notes forced their way through the inattention of the agitated youth, and, spite of the clamorous cares that besieged him, he stood still to listen. With a grandeur of declension, and ample magnificence of cadence, the loud instruments ceased ; and mellifluous flutes in liquid tones resumed the lay with a plaintive melody, which the still walls echoed with double sweetness. The har-

monious gale soothed the stormy emotions of Francesco, his soul seemed drowning in a sea of sweet sound, and for a moment his importunate cares were lulled to rest. Peace once again hovered over him, and shed her balmy dew on his head.

The soft breath of the flutes melted into a soul-subduing lamentation, and died away in sighs of tender grief, and fond regret. The pathetic strains of a funeral hymn were heard through the soft cloud of instrumental sound, which the deep knell of the full bassoon broke upon like the bell of death. The dirge sunk in gentle cadence, as if Music had lulled Grief to slumber in her arms, and Complaint had kist himself dumb on the honied lips of Consolation. Lower and
lower

lower fell the melodious whisper, till
 Echo no longer felt the sound ; a silence
 reigned still as the grave, when the shrill
 notes of the viol burst forth like the
 shrieks of long imprisoned Agony, loud
 trumpets shook the ear like the yells of
 raging Phrensy, and a voice, that seemed
 to seek Francesco, sang in accents of
 wild despair,

Restore him to me, murderer !
 Give me back my beloved child,
 The source of my life and happiness.
 Oh Absalom, my son, my Absalom,
 Would to God my life would ransom thine !
 Oh Absalom, my child, my Absalom !

Francesco's heart died within him as if
 every word was addressed to himself: he
 turned pale as if he had been convicted

in open court of murder, and sunk on his knee before an image as if to implore the mercy of his judge. His blood congealed in his veins, and the stamp of death appeared in livid hues on his visage. The moans of the unhappy Father pierced his heart. Collecting all his force for a last charge, he overcame the dismay and anguish that oppressed him. Tears of joy signed his victory, that cooled his feverish brain, and eased his bursting bosom. He felt more light and free, and regaining recollection, proceeded with apparent calmness to the mansion of his kinsman.

Barliardo received him with every mark of affection, and observing the deep traces left by perturbation in his countenance, ascribed them to the effervescence

escence of an enthusiastic mind set to work by the expectation of such wondrous attainments. The ensuing day, he said, should be the first of preparation for the great business, and the morn of that, as well as of the eight following days, must be ushered in with prayers and lustration. Francesco heard the old man to a pause, without making any reply, and then withdrew to his chamber, where nature entirely exhausted and subdued by incessant agitation of spirit sunk into transient and interrupted repose.

On the morning of the fifth day of preparation, it chanced that Benedetto, whom the occupation of the novice in necromancy left almost wholly to himself, was amusing himself as usual in the library of his uncle. He had run over

the painted breviaries, examined the frontispieces of all the well-known books, and feeling tediousness creep on him, was hastening to the garden, when an uncommon projection of a pannel in the wainscot attracted his notice. He drew it from its place from the instinctive impulse of curiosity, and found behind it a door, which had ever been concealed from his sight. He opened the door, and passing through it, was conducted by a winding staircase to a spacious apartment. The wind, which gained admision to the room, blew aside the veil that concealed the magical apparatus, and disclosed the strange spectacle to the wondering boy, who pleased with the novel scene, forgot his amazement in delight. With childish wantonness he threw aside the curtain, and

feasted

feasted his eyes with the splendid assortment of forms and colours. Void of all apprehension he advanced to the hideous shapes of the elementary kings, laughed to excess at the stern terror of their features, and aped with his smiling countenance, their threatening looks ; then having torn the golden sceptres from their hands to convert them into playthings, he found his curiosity awake to learn the meaning of this unusual sight. The magic volume lay open on the altar, and the painted page fixed his attention. He beheld therein a black monstrous form with horns and claws, surrounded with triangles, crosses, and cherubims' heads intermingled with written characters, which, prompted by curiosity, he essayed to read. Though the

words were unintelligible to him, he continued to read for some time ; hoping perhaps to dive into the sense of these mysteries.

Scarcely had he perused the leaf, 'ere a report was heard, that appeared to rend the beams of the house asunder. Benedetto looked around with anxiety and trepidation, and, lo ! before the window a thick mephitic fume rose from the ground, which gradually dilating to every side, shot forth balls of fire, and licked the walls with tongues of livid flame. A burning wind blew from the midst of it, and a sulphureous smoke spread over the room. Dismay struck her icy fangs into the heart of the affrighted boy : He fled from the book, stumbled by accident over one of the monstrous

monstrous forms, and conceiving himself in the fangs of a demon, lost all power of speech and motion. Scarcely could he crawl to the altar, in search of a place of concealment, when the window frame was flung with tremendous ruin into the chamber, and, at the moment, from the thickest of the murky vapour, an infernal form burst into the centre of the room. Its shape may be assimilated to what had no distinct form, a vast black, erect bear, had most resembled its figure : from the yawning cavern of its mouth, armed with sharp tusks of enormous magnitude, hung a huge red triform tongue ; its eyes glared like two angry comets, and its uplifted fangs burnt with glowing fire. With impetuous fury it rushed to the hapless boy, and in a voice
of

of thunder exclaimed; What want'st thou? Thou hast called me, I am here.

Benedetto lay panic-struck and speechless behind the altar.

Once again with horrid howl the monster reiterated; What want'st thou with me?

The soul of the terrified child seemed to have deserted its mansion.

Take that reward for dragging me from the friendly gloom of Hell to the abhorred beams of day, yelled the fearful form, and infixing his fangs in the tender neck of the sweet boy, strangled him. The burning talons hissed in the pure blood, the close compression stopt respiration, his rosy cheeks assumed the purple of death, and the gates of sight closed on his eyes for ever.

With

With the same fury as he had entered, the monster rushed out of the window.

It was mid-day before Pietro returned with Francesco, from his devotions. Accustomed to be met with caresses at the door by his affectionate child, the old man was surprised to see no signs of his unfortunate nephew. He enquired for him with anxious alarm, and was answered by an ancient servant, that he had perhaps fallen to sleep in the library, in which he had been shut up for some hours. I was afraid to look for him, Signor, said the man, trembling, for all, I am sure, is not right in the house: it has been so shaken, and filled with such strange noises, that I thought one stone would not have been left on another.--- Dreams, phantasms, replied Pietro;

but inwardly alarmed, he hastened with portentous apprehension to the library. As he opened the room the sulphurous vapour almost overpowered him ; but rushing forwards with precipitation, he found the secret door disclosed ; and then subdued by his terrors he staggered a few steps forwards, and fell headlong down the stairs. But raised above casualties which affected only himself, by his cares for his nephew, he cast a timid yet eager glance over the room ; and but too well convinced of his misfortune, fell without sense on the floor ; and Francesco sunk beside him.

Long lay their powers benumbed in deathlike insensibility ; slow was the return of life and perception to both, Dreading to raise his sight from the earth,

Pietro

Pietro stammered with a faint, feeble voice ; Francesco, lift up thy eyes, and tell me what thou seest.

Francesco looked round at this command, and replied, with hesitation, I see a window beaten out of its frame, the hands of the four kings without sceptres, the circles trodden down, and traces of burning claws on the tapestry.

Pietro. Seest thou nothing more ?

Francesco. I see the book of evocation open on the ground.

Pietro. Seest thou nothing more ?

Francesco. I see———oh that I had plucked out mine eyes 'ere they shewed me the tragic sight---I see Benedetto lying beside the altar, and in his ivory neck five deep wounds, whose lips seemed scorcht with fire, and have poured five
purple

purple streams on his lily bosom---I see, why does not the sun sicken at the piteous sight, and shroud his beams in nocturnal obscurity? The sweet boy's fingers twisted in the fretwork of the altar, and his teeth clinched with the agonies of death.

Pietro had again relapsed into insensibility; Francesco raised him from the floor and conveyed him to a couch. The motion recalled his fleeting sense. See'st thou nothing more, Francesco? cried he with a convulsive shudder: and then with rapid transition of passion exclaimed; who brought me here? Shall a homicide die on soft cushions? no, no, avenging Hell! be the rack or wheel my death bed, or lay me on the burning bull of Tartarus. Oh where is the body of him I have murdered? He started from his couch,

couch, and hurried to the fatal chamber, wound his arm about a pillar to support himself, and surveyed with steady gaze the altar. He approached the magic volume, cast his eye over the expanded page, and wrung with new agony, cried, yes, I am his murderer ! let men wreak their vengeance on my body, and demons employ all their infernal engines on my accursed soul. I am his murderer ! How came my hapless boy here ? I, I have dug the pit for him, and am his murderer. Why does not thy sweet face become a gorgon to me ? Why does not every drop of thy pure blood start up a devil to revenge thee ? The demon whom he unconsciously summoned, appeared ; Dirachiel, the fiercest fiend that ever sprang from the loins of Hell, or sucked the

the

the venomous dugs of his dragon mother. He found the unsuspecting infant out of the circles, and seized the proffered occasion to destroy him. Yet 'twas I, accursed Dotard, that decoyed the innocent babe into the fangs of the demon. O Earth, entomb a miscreant that pollutes thy surface ! walls close upon me, and crush a monster, whose presence makes you curse the fast foundations that forbid your flight ! He said, and passion supplying force, beat down, and split to pieces the altar, trampled on the circles, broke the images, and tore the book of evocation. For a few instants he stood mute and motionless, and then collecting the fragments of the crosses, images, and altar, into a pile, he hurried out of the room ; but overpowered by the excess
of

of feeling, sunk motionless on the stairs, where he was found by Francesco, who bore him a second time to his chamber. Overstrained emotion raised a fever in Pietro's brain, his reason and memory yielded to the errors of a delirious imagination. He raved of empires, which he had to distribute, of planets to reform, and suns to relume ; of conferences where he was to assist with Angels, of the last unction which he must administer to a dying saint, of testimony he must bear against two devils for the murder of an innocent. The violence of passion wrung a deadly damp from his body ; he conceived himself already without life ; the canopy which hung over him seemed a dim vault, his couch a bier ; the coverlit appeared a pall, and every the slightest

L

noise

noise sounded to him like the last trumpet. He whispered to Francesco, as if afraid the wall should hear ; I had once a nephew ! a little wanton laughing boy ; the crutch of my age and prop of my happiness. I lost him ; Angels saw his sportive innocence, and took him to themselves for a playfellow. See, there he stands near the Redeemer in a shining raiment, and bears the effulgent casque of Omnipotence. Ha ! I lie, I lie ! see the blood streaming from his mangled neck ! Can the endearments of angels leave vestiges thus ruinous ? No, they are prints of Hell's footsteps. Hark ! heard you that cry of sorrow ? Benedetto's parents stretch their wasted arms from the grave, and require their child from me. Ah say not I have murdered him. He
then

then sunk into the bed, hid his face beneath the cloaths, and lay breathless and panting, as if in dread of instant detection.

His horror and remorse endured for hours in the extremity of tumultuous perturbation; they then sunk into more silent anguish. He lay quiet, and at times raised his folded hands to Heaven as if supplicating mercy; but instantly snatching them asunder, he would cry; I cannot silence the voice of blood! Heaven has no ears for murderers! He appeared to slumber; but his heart echoed every sigh of Francesco with sobs of attrition and groans of anguish: he seemed consoled and resigned; but remorse and despair weighed upon his soul like a burning mountain. Thus he lay till midnight; when rising from his bed he

bade Francesco follow him, and stept lightly to the secret chamber with an apparent composure which might have deceived the most penetrating observer, and persuaded the most skilful physician that reason had regained its seat in his soul. Assisted by Francesco, he conveyed all his books of necromancy, and magical apparatus, into the garden, and formed them into a kind of funereal pile. Then seizing an unlighted torch, he held it to the moon, as if he would kindle it by the pure beams of that luminary; moved it about to fan the imaginary flame, and at length applied it to the pile. Francesco stood opposite to him in fearful expectation and dumb grief.

For some moments the old man preserved a silence that indicated a mind
fraught

fraught with woe, and then exclaimed;
 The accursed engines of my misery
 kindle and blaze ; thy face, Francesco,
 reflects the glowing flames, which to me
 are a foretaste of the hell prepared for
 my spirit. Bury my crime, as in a
 grave, from the knowledge of men, lest
 its putrid effluvia corrupt the race ; hide
 it from thy own eyes, lest they grow
 callous to atrocity. Let the sable pall
 of night shroud the nefarious act, which
 had hurled me from Heaven, were I an
 Angel. Was it not my crime that peopled
 Hell with the supernal progeny ? Dis-
 satisfied with the choicest of mortal blef-
 sings, I must stretch forth a rapacious
 hand to the sceptre of Omnipotence. Im-
 pious error ! to think that an infirm arm,
 trembling under a common burthen,

could regulate the motion of the spheres,
 and turn the earth on its axis, subdue to
 my will the inflexible laws of nature,
 and reverse the decrees of Providence.
 Oh, unheard of insolence ! Hell had ex-
 cuses for its aspiring ambition: but a step
 below the Divinity, to risk that step was
 pardonable presumption. But I, far from
 Angels as the centre from the firmament,
 to strive with mad rebellion to wrest
 his dominion from the All-powerful ! I,
 the dust-born, and dust-returning reptile,
 to lust for the attributes of Omnipotence !
 Impious thirst of aggrandisement and su-
 periority ! thou hast transformed sera-
 phim to demons, and made me a mur-
 derer. Ha ! Heaven's tribunal sits ; my
 name is denounced by the accusing spi-
 rit ; and avenging Hell rears its burning
 stake

stake for me. Guilty ! guilty ! all seeing Judge ! drag me from the bar of Justice.

Again he died under the oppression of feeling, and sunk nerveless on the ground. Francesco judging him gone for ever, bore him on his shoulders, scarcely conscious what he did, to the fatal chamber, and laid him beside the corpse of Benedetto.

A stillness like that of a deluged land reigned despotic in the house. On the two remaining inhabitants fear lay like an incubus, and conjured up terrific spectres in their minds. The old servant shut himself up, to wait in prayer a conclusion to the mysterious tumult that pervaded the house ; and Francesco lighted up as many tapers as he could collect, to counterfeit day, and illuminate the horrid

night that surrounded him. Oft he would have gone to Enemonde; but shuddered to trust himself through the thick obscurity.

Soon as the new-born day had unclosed its eyes, and laughed jocund at its parent luminary, Francesco left the corner, in which, encircled with chairs and tables, he had passed the night, and treading cautiously to the secret apartment, saw with surprise Pietro kneeling beside the corpse of Benedetto, and striving to revive it with kisses. Oft the miserable old man laid his ear to the breathless lips; oft placed his hand to the heart, which was never more to know pulsation. Then he rose, trod back a few steps, observed the body with anxious attention, and fancying signs of life, ran
back,

back, attempting to close the gaping wounds, and warm the child's icy hands in his bosom. Suddenly perceiving Francesco, he cried in a voice that had stopt the uplifted arm of death, Help me to recall life, and thine be all I have.

Sobs were the only answer.

Pietro. Then thou believest his soul irrevocably gone, and think'st me his murderer?

Francesco. Not you, alas, but a demon.

Pietro. Who threw him into the fangs of the fiend? say, if thou canst, Pietro did not. Who led him into a laboratory where every phial contained poison? say, Pietro did not. Who inveigled him into a snare, where Hell lay in ambush? say, Pietro did not; or dash to the earth

the

the chill cup of consolation. Oh ! that I was to receive such dreadful certainty of what my reason ever doubted, that bare words, oft without significance, could enforce the presence of demons !— Oh ! Benedetto, Benedetto ! martyr of this accursed truth, my blood, marrow and brains, shall melt into 'tears for thee

. Hold me not, Francesco ; let go my arm, nor obstruct my purpose. I will run into the high-ways and market-places, call together the people, and confess myself a forcerer, and the murderer of my nephew. Let go, I say. Many are there, who, like me, tempt the Omnipotent by snatching at his red thunders : I will warn them ; I will cry ; Hark, you are loosing a fiend from the
 pit

pit of woe, to destroy your children.—
Let me do the only good which yet depends on me.

Francesco. My father, I cannot, will not, leave you. Would you rush into the flames which the envious monks have long been kindling for you ?

Pietro. O just, right ! In the flames should he expire, who has ransacked the bowels of Hell for poisons, and thrown them in the way of children.

Francesco. And me, too, would you murder ?

Pietro. Murder you ?—Oh no, no !

Francesco. Me, your scholar, your friend, your kinsman, would not the sanguinary monks cast into the cruel flames with you ?

Pietro. Murder !—Oh ! expunge the accursed word from thy remembrance.—

No : seek expreffions that may found like it, for all thy wants and feelings ; that thy questions and answers, thy entreaties and thanksgivings, may torture me to death. When thou faluteft me, call me, my child's murderer. When thou wilt flatter and propitiate me, name me my child's murderer. O God, O God ! do human hearts take fo much breaking, or doft thou love to protract and fport with our miferies ? Do not weep, good coufin, I will not murder either thee or myfelf ; and a tear of pity would be fcalding lead to me. To pre- ferve my life fhall be my moft facred duty ; to maintain my health in full vi- gour, that my fenfe of my guilt may be perfect, and remorse unabated. So fhall I prepare myfelf for Hell, and anticipate
that

that world of wailing, where no ray of heavenly grace finds admittance.

Francesco. Oh, think not of it, my father ! Will not an erected church expiate the most flagitious actions ?

Pietro. Will a grain of musk sweeten the lake of Sodom ? Never, never ! The exiled angels shall find mercy ; but I never shall. The balmy accents of pardon shall sound eternal bliss to princes, who have slain millions of their people to encrease their empire ; to the seducers of innocent girls, who bring the victims of their voluptuous appetites to infamy, prostitution and suicide ; the dews of celestial grace shall spread to all the tyrants of the earth ; to the great murderer of the innocents ; to the wretches who blasphèmed their Saviour,
and

and crucified their God ; to all these, all-gracious Heaven shall open his arms ; but to me, never : from the general act of grace I alone am excepted. When new worlds shall have risen and decayed, when new suns have been illumed and burnt out, my tortures shall continue still fresh and unexhausted.

Francesco. Gracious Heaven, be merciful to us !

Pietro. Never, never !—Ha ! look there—See how the blood runs afresh, to write me murderer ! Does not every opening wound proclaim me murderer ?

Francesco. All gracious Heaven, have mercy on us !

Pietro. Nay ; seest thou not warm, living blood, trickle down from the chasms I have made in the sweetest work
of

of nature ?—See there a drop, and there, and there——

Francesco. My father, passion imposes on your credulous fancy ; there are no such realities as your distempered brain presents to you.

Pietro. Thank thee, thank thee, kind Francesco ! Thou weepst with me, and shakest in my arms, as if thyself hadst murdered him.

Francesco. Oh ! I have murdered him.

Pietro. Thou ?

Francesco. Why did I ever quit him !

Pietro. No ; I only have done the deed of horror. Was't not I, who built a kennel for the fiend that worried him ? Ha ! am not I in the den of perpetration ? And is not the air poison to me ? Where are all the implements of his perdition,
and

and mine ? All is empty as a new-made grave.---Has the humane earth, in pity to her children, entombed the deadly weapons?---Where is the accursed volume ? --Where is the infernal altar?---Where——

Francesco. You conveyed all, last night, into the garden, and laid them in a heap together.

Pietro. Did I do that ? Remembrance took no note of it. I feel a chasm in my mind, where all is void between the first shock of this freezing discovery, and my waking beside the body of my poor Benedetto. Well has delirium supplied the office of reason ! Hence to the garden, and let devouring flames consume these infernal engines of his and my perdition.

All

All his powers, collected for this last occasion, left no appearance of age or debility in the old man, who acted with all the alacrity of youthful vigour. He ran to the hearth, snatched a brand from the fire, and rushed with Francesco to the garden. In a moment, the pile was wrapt in fierce flames, that soon reduced it to a heap of dead ashes. During this, his tortures had appeared suspended, and his mind to have recovered some serenity ; but as the flames expired, remorse resumed her stern empire over him ; and he exclaimed, in a tone of frantic despair, I will strew these glowing ashes on my head ! I will mingle them with my tears, in the cup which consolation reaches to me, and drink them off, to my perdition. Ah ! could they re-

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store

store my Benedetto, I would heap burning afflictions on my head, and drown myself in a sea of sorrows.—Ah ! nothing, nothing can revive him ! nothing can absolve me from the guilt of the abhorred deed ; no penances, no atonements. And ought a murderer to wish for mercy ? No ; let Hell crush me with its whole weight of vengeance, and every race of men heap curses on my head. In the church of St. Oliveta, a tomb shall be erected to Benedetto, on which, when Hell shall have taken me to itself, let the tale of my horrid act be inscribed ; and let the bones of the murderer moulder at the feet of his unhappy victim. Not that thereby eternal mercy may extend to my spirit, or that the prayers which are showered on him, may

2

descend

descend on me; but that almighty justice may be reminded of my crime, and that no charitable pilgrim may pass over my grave, without adding a curse to the accumulated damnation that presses upon me.

Drooping and exhausted, at length, Pietro collected the ashes, and bore them to his chamber. The corpse of Benedetto he filled with the most precious spices, and cloathed it in a robe of white and silver. On the second day, it was interred in the church of St. Oliveta; and a perennial mass was established for the repose of the spirit.

All that Pietro had suffered previous to the interment of Benedetto, seemed to have been but the symptoms of what he endured afterwards: his perturbation

then was comparatively relieved by his bursts and explosions of reproach and indignation. Now held down by his weariness and imbecility, rent and bursting with the imprisoned agonies of remorse and attrition, his whole soul was fixed on two images---his Benedetto floating in all the extacies of Heaven---himself writhing in the torments of inextinguishable Hell, and baited by relentless demons. He could not weep, nor sob, nor sigh: nature, at the last ebb, wanted strength to free itself from its pains by any channel. Abstracted from every thing around him, he was alive only to the stings of remorse, which he cherished as the sole expiation of his crime, and which he hoped might mitigate, though it could not revoke, the sentence of everlasting misery.

The

The day after Benedetto's burial, the unhappy Pietro confessed himself to the Abbot of St. Oliveta, and received absolution of his sins, but distrusted its efficacy : his guilt seemed to him of so deep a dye, that not all the fires of purgatory could bleach him ; of so horrid a hue, that Heavenly mercy must stop short, and shrink from it. He obtained from the Abbot permission to be interred at the feet of Benedetto, and to have their sad history engraved on their sepulchre. For this, he devised the tenth of his property to the monastery, and bequeathed the residue to Francesco, Contented on these two points, the miserable Pietro grew more composed ; he ordered himself to be borne in his couch to the library, and placed before

the crucifix, on which he kept his eyes ever fixed, entreating from it some signal of Heaven's mercy. He took neither nourishment nor medicine ; never turned his look from the image, nor opened his close-compressed lips, but to ask some sign of salvation.

Could the two most mortal opposites of nature, Life and Death, ever be united, they might be accounted so in Pietró. His body lay senseless and motionless as marble, the mere tomb of his spirit. No motion, nor convulsive shiver of the limbs, indicated the presence even of distempered animation : no vital heat was perceptible to the most exquisite touch ; the keenest eye could discern no marks of respiration. Death had benumbed all the extremities, and

carried

carried on his approaches to the citadel of life. At the heart, Pietro's powers made a last stand.---Here he felt a revulsion, which at once gave him assurance of life, and notice of instant extinction. Death menaced every moment to quench the last spark of animation.

On the third day, a sleepy torpor (the short flights of the soul, preparatory to her final departure) closed, sometimes for hours, the eye-lids of the woe-worn Pietro. His awaking was indicated only by a slow and languid elevation of his eyes, and by a feeble, half-suppressed cry of, A sign, image of my Redeemer ! a sign that my sins are forgiven me ! The loudest noise could make no impression on his ears ; his eyes saw no object but the crucifix, which would have appeared to them, though it had been no longer

actually present. Towards evening, as he revived from a state between a doze and a trance, and re-commenced his faint, but earnest supplication for some token of divine mercy, the wooden image thrice inclined its head. The last breath of Pietro's life, which had waited but for this blessing, exhaled in a transport of joy.---He exclaimed, God has forgiven me!---and closed his eyes for ever.

His corpse was deposited in the church of St. Oliveta, beside his beloved Benedetto. A superb monument was erected over their grave, on which their dreadful catastrophe was inscribed as a warning to posterity.*

* Swinburne saw the stone in 1777.—Vide Swinburne's Journey through both the Sicilies, from the Year 1777 to 1780, Vol. III.

Already

Already had experience taught Francesco, that the enjoyment of riches was at some distance from the possession of them. Ever since the death of Benedetto, he had been the virtual possessor of Pietro's property; and yet he had not once dared to indulge himself with the sight of his Enemondé. He was compelled to watch over his wealth, like a dragon over subterranean gold. Never durst he leave the bed of his dying kinsman, lest the cowed legacy-hunters, who crouded about a sick man like crows round distempered cattle, should come between him and his expectations, and intercept his inheritance. He durst not, in the presence of his expiring relative, manifest the smallest sign of the inward satisfaction and triumph
with

with which the prospect of independence inspired him, lest the offended pride of the testator might instigate him to revoke his act in the youth's favour, and, by too early a seizure of his prey, he might lose it for ever. Scarcely was Pietro immured in the tomb, ere Francesco burst, like a spring long held back from its proper bent, from the dreary constraint in which he had been retained, and ran to his lovely girl; his bosom swelling with exultation, and his eyes flashing with the flame of joy, as the summer sky with playful lightnings.

As if a wall, that reached from earth to heaven, had been removed from between them; as if both had just disengaged themselves from vows of eternal chastity; as if each had escaped the
hands

hands of the executioner, Francesco and Enemonde rushed into each other's arms. As if on that point only where they stood, was vital air to be inhaled ; as if on that point only was earth below, and heaven above, they stood there, fixed and immovable. As if they feared that, at any the smallest interstice, misfortune should insert his flaming sword, to divide them, or place immeasurable wastes between their meeting, they stood close conjoined, and inseparable as plates of marble. Words seemed too mean a dress for their emotions of exultation, too incompetent representatives of their transports, too dim a medium to convey their sentiments. Looks and sighs, close embraces and warm kisses, extatic murmurs and fervent caresses, are the rhetoric

toric of love; and, with all these tropes at their command, they were at no loss to express their mutual rapture.

Long held their joy, ere words were thought of; and when they recurred to them, 'twas but at intervals, when a solitary monosyllable would steal out mid a croud of kisses. My! thy! dear youth! sweet girl! were alone employed, till doubt brought into play its---Can it be? is it possible? And finally, when joy grew less loud and riotous, Enemonde in melting accents asked; And art thou indeed mine, my beloved? And Francesco replied, in a voice of rapture; I am indeed thine, my beloved? This made way for further discourse, and restored their lips to the use of language,

Enemonde,

Enemonde. And thou art really mine, joy of my life? once more assure me that thou art, and confirm my felicity. Is every impediment removed? Does fortune no longer withhold her consent to our union?

Francesco. Every obstruction is levelled with the ground, every chain is loosed from us. I am thine, thou mine, as sure as joy is in thy arms, or misery without them. Iron chests crammed with gold are mine, are thine; fields and vineyards are mine, and thine; all that can banish care, or fix pleasure, belongs to me and to thee, source and partner of my happiness!

Enemonde. Welcome, fortune, thy gifts! since love is in their retinue. All are dear to me, but as the vehicle of my
Francesco.

Francesco. Was ever girl so blessed as I! riches in reserve, youth and health in my frame, virtue in my heart, and my beloved in my arms, what is wanting to my felicity? and yet a chilling damp pervades my frame, and every pulsation of thy high strung heart against my bosom, is to mine the stroke of a dagger.

Francesco. What means this dark foreboding? But may not the rarefaction of sudden and extreme joy strain and tear the mind, as conduits are burst by the vernal dissolution of the long frozen water? Thou hast not dared to credit the reports that spread of thine and my good fortune, and doubts still combat within thee against thy belief that I am heir to Pietro's opulence? Thou canst not trust thy
senses,

senses, when they assure thee of so much happiness ?

Enemonde. How is it possible I should believe that my wishes are so amply, so speedily accomplished ?

Francesco. They are. Thou art mine, and I thine, till death shall divorce us.

Enemonde. Oh yes, yes ! thy kisses certify me of it.

Francesco. Let me imprint certainty on thy heart ; on thy hesitating heart, that still heaves dubious in thy swelling bosom.

Enemonde. Stay thy licentious hand, dear youth ! Expansive joy may be too lavish of her treasures.

Francesco. Too lavish to thy bridegroom ? Can the house be too free to its master ?

mafter? Art thou not my bride, and doft thou fear a thief in thy husband?

Enemonde. Remember, though thy bride, I am not thy wife; and the fhine of modefty may be approached but by the husband. Thy lips may fpeak thy love to me in every form of blandifhment; mine fhall answer them with kifles; but let my bofom be facred and inviolate. Some fecrets muft be unveiled by the god of marriage; others even he fhould leave in myftery; and to the woman, who has left all her modefty at the altar, the nuptial benediction fhall be converted into a curfe that will deftroy her hymeneal felicity. What as a bride I may grant thee, I freely beftow; but let us not ftrip marriage of its harveft, by reaping its

its joys in the blade. What we bestow on our lovers, is stolen from our husbands.

Francesco. Oh, let me enjoy as both ! have not I deserved all that love and hymen can afford me ?

Enemonde. Oh, doubtless ! thou hast merited every thing.

Francesco. Indeed I have. Didst thou but know, Enemonde, what I have atchieved since I saw thee !

Enemonde. I dare swear, the labours of Hercules.

Francesco. Little less, believe me.

Enemonde. I can imagine them. Thou hast strained dry eyes for tears, when observation was on thee ; thou hast laboured to heave up sighs of compassion, when all beat high and triumphant within thee. When thou besoughtest heaven for the

N recovery

recovery of Pietro with thy tongue, thy heart prayed for the possession of Enemonde. Both thy wishes were not gratified; and what so painful as ungratified wishes? When Pietro slept, you watched; when he waked, you sighed; poor youth! when has sleep composed thy weary eyelids? Appearances confirm my conjectures. Fasting and prayers have faded thy rosy cheek, and macerated thy plump visage. Ah, hypocrite! never wert thou so lovely! love has flushed thy complexion with his finest purple, and my every glance brings home fresh fuel to my passion. Cease to stifle me with kisses! ah, remove those burning hands from my bosom!

Francesco. Ha! say'st thou burning hands?

Enemonde.

Enemonde. I do not much depend on thy piety, Francesco ; I fear the church will not gain much in thee. Thou wilt erect few altars ; thou wilt not found many cloisters.

Francesco. Oh but I will, I will !

Enemonde. Really ? and for once, his blessings shall remind man of his creator ? But what comes to you ? You are not angry ? forgive my raillery, dearest youth, and kiss me the kiss of forgiveness——not so, Francesco, my lips, not my bosom, were guilty ; let them then bear the punishment, or receive the pardon.

Francesco. Why, cruel girl, dost thou exclude me from the elysium of love ? I have swum through the nine belts of

Styx to arrive at it? ah, too well have I bought admission!

Enemonde. Francesco, repeat it once again, and I will shut myself from thee, till thou ledest me to the altar.—Thy blood is liquid fire.

Francesco. And thine, congealed water. After what I have ventured for thee, to meet these shrinking apprehensions! Oh, Enemonde, didst thou but know what I have done for thee, thou wouldst think no sacrifice too great for me.

Enemonde. Instruct me in these mighty efforts, that I may reward them as they merit, if it be in my power to do so.

Francesco. Wilt thou reward them as with thee?

Enemonde.

Enemonde. Should I find them worthy of such a recompence.

Francesco. Dost thou esteem it nothing, to have retained my reason in the whirlwind of passion, when thou saidst, I must languish through eternal years, ere in thy arms I completed my happiness. Was it nothing to stay the uplifted dagger of suicide, and consent to bear the load of life for thee ?

Enemonde. Deduct from that merit all that is due to self love, and what shall I be thy debtor ?

Francesco. Dost thou reckon it nothing, to have retired, gnawn by jealousy, into the habitation of torporific tediousness, and to have sworn never to become thy husband during the life of Benedetto ?

Enemonde. Art thou insane, Francesco? thou couldst not have forsworn the possession of me.

Francesco. May you never be mine, if I did not! I confessed my passion for thee to Pietro, and laboured to win from his liberality a nuptial present, that might set us above the restraints of poverty. He raged, as if I had revealed to him a sacrilege: he threatened to expel me from his house, to make Benedetto a monk, and to bequeath his treasures to a monastery: he deafened me with reproaches of my ingratitude, rent my heart with lamentations of his miserable destiny, and so staggered my understanding, that I besought pardon, and received it only on condition of this oath, which was followed by another, from the observance

of which his death has released me. On this, he led me to a secret apartment, unveiled a magical apparatus, promised me dominion over the spirits of the higher and nether worlds, and engaged to initiate me in all the mysteries of necromancy. The life of Benedetto now stood between thee and me ; my soul was tost in all the agitation of jealousy, and I wandered about like an unhappy exile far from all that was dear to me. In the full hurricane of passion I met Horatio, and saw in his cap one of the violet gloves which I gave thee. Was it nothing, to refrain from murdering him, who bore thus in triumph a pledge of thy preference ?

Enemonde. Oh, the presumption of jealousy, that sport of every delusion

conceives its every conjecture infallible, its every inference unerring! this glove on which, not an hour since, I was employed, is the fellow to that thou saw'st in the cap of Horatio.

Francesco. To this, to this, dear perfidious, which since that morn, I have ever borne next my heart.

Enemonde. And of which behold the true companion. Have I detected my thief at last? depend on a punishment for thy offence, thou spoiler. I have fought for it, as for a jewel dropt in long grafs. But see, is this, think you, a glove for my arm? look, thou dupe of jealousy, how close it clings to my hand, and fits like a skin to my fingers? Canst thou not guess it was made for the lusty arm and full fingers of Horatio's mother.

The

The countess loves embroidered gloves, and Horatio requested me to work a pair for her to her fancy ; I consented ; his impatience snatcht from me the first finished glove, ere its companion was completed, and in sportive gallantry he placed it in his cap. Well mayst thou blush at thy injurious suspicions ! now boast that thou hast not murdered the knight ; now vaunt thy matchless victories over passion, thou slave to jealousy !

Francesco. Not so fast, Enemonde ; now at least I will state a service that demands every acknowledgement. Having shaken off the demon of jealousy, I flew to father Hilario, and enquired of him if mortal citations could constrain spirits ; and he answered in the negative. Do
you

you see no merit in refraining to murder Pietro, the hoary impostor, who had defrauded me of my only treasure, my precious Enemonde ?

Enemonde. Why didst thou refrain ? that the sword of avenging justice might not separate thee from me for ever. Canst thou call it virtue, to have desisted from a crime; which must have ruined thy soul's hopes, and counteracted thy first purpose. Magnanimous Sampson ! thou wouldst not pull down ruin on thy lord, lest thou should'st be crushed with him.

Francesco. Not so fast, fair one. Penances, mortifications, and prayer were to adapt me for the great work of summoning spirits. So Pietro directed ; and I acquiesced, curious to learn how far the

the

the old liar would proceed with his deception. In the church of St. Oliveta I knelt till my limbs were benumbed to stone, and spun out my soul in prayers, that God would render that true, which sound reason declared impossible. Fired at length, I rose, slid from the side of Pietro, who absorbed in his empty projects, was as senseless to every thing else as one of the wooden angels that support the altar, walked round the church, and leaning my ear to a confessional box, heard the avowal of a penitent, who accused himself of incontinence with a certain Enemonde. As he turned his head, he appeared to me like Horatio.

Enemonde. Let my face plead to the arraignment. How says it; guilty or not guilty?

Francesco.

Francesco. Nor guilt, nor shame have power to change a feature of it.

Enemonde. Account that a competent witness, where long practice of crime has not rendered the soul callous to accusation ; where notorious depravity has not hardened the features to detection. Whether Orfalini was the penitent that thou hast overheard, let this letter to my father inform thee.

She gave a paper to Francesco, who hastily unfolded it, and read :

“ Castle of Orfalini, St. Luke’s day.

“ I have already ordered my horse
 “ for my journey to the Prince of Haute-
 “ ville, with whom my first business
 “ shall be to procure a provision for the
 “ good Coroaldi. Before the close of a
 “ month

“ month I hope to bring him in person
“ an assurance of it. Before then I do
“ not expect to revisit Salerno.

“ Horatio Orfalini.”

Enemonde. This is dated previous to the time when this suspicious incident took place. Dost thou give up the voracity of thy eyes, which inform thee of such fallacies.

Francesco. Grant I do, I retain credit for my hearing, which too plainly witnessed Benedetto's declarations that thy kiss was *so sweet* to him, and that thy touch *so thrilled* him.

Enemonde. Heaven keep thee in thy senses ! thou wilt be jealous of my waiting woman, if thou canst fancy a child thy rival.

Francesco.

Francesco. Let me proceed, I beseech you. Thy possession was to be obtained but by a desperate act, and to that I strained all my faculties, and goaded on my resolution.

Enemonde. Nothing less, I suppose, than my murder?

Francesco. That stroke I reserved in case of your perfidy. I found by chance, or rather love led me to the discovery, an old bear's-skin, which had probably been used by some scholar of Barliardo, at a carnival; an old monk deeply versed in chymistry had taught me to make fireworks, which should emit thick smoke, cast balls of flame, and make loud explosions.

Enemonde. Francesco, what possesses thee? I fear excessive joy has deranged thy

thy senses. Or wilt thou seriously and soberly persuade me, that I should recompence thee for pilfering orchards, or frightening old women?—Let us adjourn this subject to another occasion.

Francesco. I loosed from its frame one of the windows of the mysterious chamber which looks into the garden, but left it apparently firm in its station: I opened the magic volume in a part which contained an invocation to an infernal spirit——

Enemonde. Art thou intoxicated or delirious? Let me go, Francesco, I have much of my household business to mind.

Francesco. Dost thou fear already, that thy contempt for my merits was premature? No, fair one, thou shalt stay to do me justice. Depending on Benedetto's
curiosity

curiosity for the success of my design, I opened the pannel, which conceals the door leading to the secret apartment, in such a manner, that the most inattentive eye must have remarked it. When we were at mass, Benedetto was accustomed to amuse himself in the library. On the fifth morning of my preparation this was performed, when stealing unobserved by Pietro, from the church, I cloathed myself in the bear's-skin, and having provided all my implements, concealed myself in the garden under the loosened window——

Enemonde. To what tends all this idle farce, Francesco?

Francesco. Justly had I reasoned on the boy's curiosity; it drew him into the mysterious room, and to the altar; where
he

he read the open page of the magic volume. While he was thus employed, I flung a firework into the apartment, which filled it with thick vapour; then forcing in the window with a violent crash, I rushed in, and finding him in a swoon, strangled him with a pair of red hot pincers

Enemonde tore herself from the arms of Francesco, and flew to the tabernacle for protection as if a demon pursued her. For some minutes she hid her face in the cover of the altar; at length raising her head, she exclaimed; and is it then true? What? cried Francesco, with alarm and agitation.

Enemonde. That joy can be so near a kin to madness?

O

Francesco.

Francesco. Thus was I liberated from my oath, was the future heir of Pietro, and thy husband. Was there any other road open to me? Were there any other means in nature, to liberate me from the slavery into which the old deceiver had decoyed me? Had I murdered the boy in any other way, suspicion of the fact must have fallen on me, and instead of reaching happiness in thy arms, I had rushed upon an infamous death on the scaffold. But now the suspicious vigilance, even of the priesthood, is baffled; for before what tribunal can they cite a demon?

Enemonde. Francesco, art thou really sober?

Francesco. Can intoxication preserve such coherence? I threw off my disguise,
returned

returned to the church, and thence with Barliardo to his mansion. What had happened was soon revealed to him, and his distempered imagination laid him open to my delusion. He fancied the boy had unconsciously summoned a fiend, who finding him without the circles had strangled him. He called himself Benedetto's murderer, raved and wept, and gave himself up to remorse and despair, till nature no longer sufficed to his efforts, and he sunk into languor and despondency. He lay motionless before the crucifix, and spent his last forces in asking a sign of heavenly forgiveness. My soft weakness at length moved me to compassion for the old swindler, who would have given me a book filled with falsehood and jargon as

a recompence for the loss of thy living and substantial treasures; I mounted within the hollow image while he was in a doze, and moved its head thrice as he awoke. Pacified with this pledge of salvation, he loosed his hold to life, and his soul took its flight to Hell or Heaven.

Enemonde. Strange, that delight should operate so upon our senses! May I own, without exciting thy laughter, Francesco, that thy love accents knell in my ears as if thou had'st murdered the good Pietro, and Benedetto, the sweetest boy that ever gamboled over the face of nature.

Francesco. Thy ears are faithful interpreters: I have murdered both; but 'twas to obtain thee.

Enemonde.

Enemonde. Then my eyes must be false intelligencers. Thou hast related to me a tale that makes every particle of my frame crawl within me, and methinks thy countenance has lost nothing of its serenity. Thy eye balls do not start from their sockets, nor do thy hairs rise like disturbed serpents.

Francesco. The retrospect of the deed leaves me as cool as eve, and composed as the ocean, when its mad tempests give place to halcyon calms. But when it was brewing in my inmost heart, while the nucleus was completing like a gathering cancer in my bosom; while toft on a sea of passion, now hope raised me to Heaven and now jealousy sunk me to the centre; then was my whole frame shaken as with an earthquake, and the

scirocco of Tartarus seemed to breathe on my soul. I inhaled burning sulphur, and hot lava ran in my veins.

Enemonde. Prove thyself a liar, I conjure thee, Francesco.

Francesco. Then must I prove truth a perjury. A raging fire inflamed my blood, when I found the fatal skin; it seemed as though the infernal deed was written in phosphorus on every wall around me; and when I strangled the artless boy, and the fiery pincers hissed in his neck, the furnace of Hell seemed to blaze around me. But, oh, such an ague of the soul followed this fever! a chillness seized me, that congealed my blood, and benumbed all my sinews. When lamenting over his nephew's body, Pietro accused himself of the crime I had perpetrated;

perpetrated ; when he exclaimed that all finners should find mercy but the murderer of Benedetto ; when he fancied the wounds bled afresh, and, infected by the contagious phrensy, my eyes confirmed the delusion, and a full confession of my guilt was bursting impetuous from my lips ; then, Enemonde, a rigid frost crept on me that would have wrung a recantation of their faith from the first christians, who with unshrinking fortitude sustained all the rage of fire, and mocked the searching knife of their executioners : and into this furnace of intolerable fever, into this ice-pit of gripping frost, I have cast myself, to win thee. For thee, Enemonde, I murdered the innocent Benedetto ; for thee I have exiled myself from Heaven, and incurred cer-

tain perdition; and now say, if obduracy to conviction will permit thee, that I have not deserved all thou canst bestow on me.

Enemonde. If thou hast done this, if it can be true—

Francesco. Trifle not with my impatience ! *I have* done it, 'tis true.

Enemonde. Then art thou the most execrable monster that ever Hell brought forth for the destruction of man.

Francesco. So be it ! In thy arms I wait my regeneration to humanity.

Enemonde. If ever they enfold thee, may it be their eternal lot to fondle devils ! Ha, shall I live under one roof with thee, thou murderer of innocence ? Shall I kiss lips that spoke honied words to him, whose loved flower their breath
had

had blasted ? Shall I suffer hands about my neck that have been embrued in the blood of the gentle Benedetto ? Cast me into the escargatory* of Hell, where crawl unnumbered toads and adders ; there let hunger whip me till I devour their poisonous flesh, and thirst scorch me till I lick the slime from their madid skins ; I will rather live an eternity in that den than one hour in thy arms.

Francesco. Enemonde, I hope, present surprise over-rules thy settled purpose. I hope, you remember your oath

* An escargatory is a magazine or nursery for snails frequent in monasteries, situate in inland countries, where the scarcity of fish reduces the religious, of both sexes, to feed during their solemn fasts on those reptiles,

to be mine, were I a mass of depravities and abominations.

Enemonde. Though that vow, which escaped me in the phrensy of passion, had reached the presence of God and hung perdition over me, I violate it. Did'st thou think, monster, the blood of innocence *a grateful sacrifice to the heart of a woman*. Did'st thou think, I would lull thee to sleep on my bosom? thee, whom the executioner and the wheel shall consign to damnation? Away, murderer! roll Alps and Apennines betwixt us; Almighty Heaven, place immensity between us! Away, wretch, for whom my tortured imagination can find no adequate term of abhorrence; away, nor infect the ambient air with thy poisons.

Francesco. Enemonde! listen to me, my beloved,

Enemonde.

Enemonde. My ears are henceforth deaf to thy blandishments, and thy love murmurs shall sound like the convulsive rattle of thy dying victim.

Francesco. Enemonde, I warn you drive me not to madness; my blood begins to boil with fury, and thou know'st I am ~~fleeced~~ to murder. Enemonde, cease thus to treat me ! Have I not done all this to obtain thee ? O thou ineffably my beloved, speak consent and consecration to me. Say thou art mine; art thou not the price of my perdition ?

Enemonde. May an opened grave be my nuptial couch a putrid corpse my bridegroom, sooner than thee ; thou Gorgon to my sight ! Hence, murder me not with thy aspect.

Francesco. Observe your oath, Enemonde ! give me my recompence.

Enemonde,

Enemonde. No other recompence can I give thee than curses, contempt and eternal hatred. As sure——she snatched a knife from the table, and unloosing her long tresses, cut them off---as sure as these locks will never more adorn my head, so sure I enter into the most rigid cloister, there to expiate in severest penance the crime of having loved a monster that disgraces humanity.

Francesco. Ha, is this my recompence? But still I love thee, and thus I shorten thy sufferings.

He attempted to wrest the knife from her hands, but in vain : she threw it out of the window, and cried for help against murder, Francesco fled with precipitation.

As if the girl had revealed his guilt to the whole city, he ran affrighted and goaded

goaded by avenging furies through Salerno, rushed to the sea shore, mounted the highest summit of a chain of rocks, and flung himself headlong down. Where he should descend, consternation had left him no power to consider or enquire ; he fell on a shoal, that but just rose above the surface ~~of the~~ water. The vital parts remained uninjured from the fall, but a sharp angle of the rock, which grazed him in the descent, had torn his left cheek from the bone, which it had broken ; and both his legs and one arm were fractured. Death, into whose soft downy arms he meant to sink, had placed a bed of stone to receive him, strewn with tortures.

For some time Francesco's crushed frame lay void of life and feeling ; then

the trembling pulse recovered a feeble motion, sudden spasms shook his nerves, and his respiration prest laborious through his clenched teeth. He had been in a swoon of anguish, not of death, and his soul soon found itself alive under the ruins of its shattered hut. The refreshing breezes, which played on the water, brought him to himself, and enabled him to see and feel every pang his torturer had prepared for him. His first look was to his maimed limbs, where he saw his blood and marrow soaking through his vestments. Pain had infix'd her viper tooth in the seat of sensibility, and insinuated her subtle venom. He sought to approach the edge of the rock, but could not stir himself; death had bound him for execution on a stage of torture
where

where he lay immovable. A burning fever, kindled by anguish, raged in his blood, to which the heat of the meridian sun, reflected from the rocks and water, gave additional violence.

In the green mirror that encompassed him he saw the wall of rocks reflected, that cut him off from the land; he heard the waves dashing against their base, and the horrors of his situation opened on him. As the objects disengage themselves from darkness when the orient morn stands effulgent on the eastern hills, her starting place, the miserable, guilty Francesco, saw his deeds rise before him, and at first his too precipitate suicide appeared the most obnoxious of his offences. He lamented that he had left his dearly purchased wealth un-
enjoyed,

enjoyed, which had lured nymphs to his
 arms, before whose beauties the charms
 of Enemonde had veiled their diminish-
 ed lustre in shame and envy, and who
 had richly consoled him for the loss of
 his ungrateful fair. Regret stimulated
 him to vain struggles for escape; loud
 were his cries for assistance, but none
 heard them: no vessel, however small,
 approached the dangerous shoal in which
 he had involved himself. Flies, wasps,
 and hornets swarmed about his battered
 visage, from which he had no means of
 driving them; inserted their suckers into
 his torn flesh, and sated themselves with
 his blood and juices. The loose spray
 of the sea was cast over him by the
 breeze, and wherever the briny drops
 fell into his wounds, they gave a keener
 edge

edge to his torments. He cried to Heaven and to men for rescue ; justified and cursed his deed ; called Pietro and Orfalina his murderers ; besought the All-gracious to terminate his misery, to open an abyfs beneath him, to draw down the rocks on his head. He strained his nerves by vain efforts, and stung with agony, cut new wounds in his flesh by uselefs struggles. The torrid sun blistered and peled the skin from his face and neck ; and burning thirst seared his palate. He lay on the most excruciating engine, on which Hell ever martyred its victims, till the evening, and till the morning again ; without sleep, without any mitigation of his anguish, which redoubled with every fresh pang. His strength was annihilated, and did not

suffice to the faintest motion or groan. A cormorant lighted on him and ate out his eyes.

Towards the evening of the second day, the rising winds howled a note of comfort to the wretched sufferer; the sea curled into higher waves, and the distant thunder growled in hoarse murmurs. The miserable object of such accumulated tortures implored Heaven to bury him beneath the ocean, or to hurl its flaming bolts at his head. The tempest grew more obstreperous; the winds raised the waters mountains high, and hoisted them far over the rock, where lay the suffering sinner. One of the waves in its return bore his mangled body into the sea, and completed and terminated his punishment.

F I N I S.

MARY STUART,

A

TRAGEDY.

BY FREDERICK SCHILLER.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY J. C. M. ESQ.

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1801.

PREFACE
OF
THE TRANSLATOR.

IF the Translator of the following Drama has but moderately succeeded in his attempt, he conceives that a Preface to recommend a work of SCHILLER to the English Public would be superfluous. Should he have quite failed in his undertaking, he is also well aware, that the penetration of that Public is such, that no panegyric of his could recommend a mutilated performance to its attention.—Notwithstanding these considerations, he is induced, by reasons which he hopes will not be deemed entirely unsatisfactory, to prefix a short Preface to this Work.

He has been so fortunate as to witness the immediate effect produced, by the representation of

the piece, on a German Audience; he has heard not only very general approbation, but at the same time some tokens of partial disapprobation; and thinks that possibly a double advantage may arise from a short view of the piece, which, while it reconciles to propriety and to truth the points objected to by some German critics, may clear the way for his English readers and enable them to form a more adequate judgment of the merits not only of the whole together, but also of its constituent parts.

The Author has taken his view of the interest attending this historical fable from a new point. The action commences after the commissioners have sentenced Mary. Elizabeth has not yet signed the death-warrant. In the short period between this and her death, the poet has brought an astonishing variety of interest into action, and most of the circumstances, which constituted that of former plays on this subject, are only touched in the dialogue.

The characters appear to be all drawn with wonderful propriety.—It was objected at the re-

presentation of the tragedy, that Mary, by acknowledging in the first Scenes of the first Act, her guilt in conniving at the murder of her husband, departs too much from the character required of a heroine, and abases herself in the eyes of spectators, who are expected to pity her misfortunes.

If a faultless character were, for the purposes of the Drama, a *conditio sine quâ non*, I fear that the history of the world would furnish very few subjects for either heroes or heroines. Mary is represented as what she must be ; she is the gold of the mine, intrinsically precious ; yet burthened with much extrinsic impurity, which lessens, at the first glance, the value of the royal ore. The fiery ordeal is necessary to develop the metal from the substances with which it is mixed ; with every process, her innate worth becomes more and more conspicuous, till at length quite freed from the fortuitous excrescences which deformed her, she enforces that respect, which was perhaps before due to the virtuous part of her character. I know not whether the representation of such a character, with all its imperfections on its head, may not

better serve the purposes of religion and morality, than one supernaturally virtuous ; which, however it may excite our compassion by its unmerited sufferings, would be exempt from the most terrible of all, the consciousness of guilt, and the agony of remorse. Indeed her's appears to be exactly the character which Aristotle chooses as the best possible for dramatic representation : Ἐστὶ δὲ τοιοῦτος, ὁ μὴτε ἀρετῇ διαφέρων, καὶ δικαιοσύνης μὴτε διὰ κακίαν καὶ μοχθηρίαν μετὰ βαλλων εἰς τὴν δυστυχίαν, ἀλλὰ δι' αἰμαρτίαν τινὰ. *i. e.* " It is he, who neither excels in virtue and justice, nor through vice and depravity, falls into calamity ; but through some fault incident to human nature." For such the word αἰμαρτία seems to be ; a fault committed, contrary to the natural disposition of the agent, when transported by some violent passion ; and as such it is surely used by the Evangelist.—As to the accusation upon which her sentence was founded, the Poet supposes her innocent. It is a controverted point in history, and he is entitled to his choice. The persecutions she has suffered, for a crime she has not committed, rouse our commiseration ; our

pity is increased by her consciousness, and sincere repentance, of her former guilt; and our minds receive the most religious impression from the indirect, though inevitable, punishment which follows her misdeed. She is at the beginning presented to our contemplation, in her blackest colours—to use her own words,

“ She may say

“ That she is better than her reputation.”

With every new indignity which is offered her, she gains upon our affections; at every step she takes towards the grave, she collects new rays to increase the splendour of her final apotheosis.

The character of Elizabeth is incomparably delineated. Every impartial judge, however nationally bigotted to our illustrious Monarch, must acknowledge in it, the accomplished picture of the ambitious, politic, mistrustful, vain, and jealous woman. The grand outlines have been drawn by the historian; but the picture has been finished, by the masterly pencil of the Poet.

The intriguing, deceitful, weak, interested,

ambitious Leicester ; a man without honour, without generosity, without humanity ; and to crown his character, a coward, is likewise a study from the hints of the historian. Wherever the situations are not strictly authorised by history, they are at least probable, and clash in no instance with the acknowledged principles of the practised courtier.

Shrewsbury is endowed with sterling British honesty ; is undismayed by the cabals of his antagonists, and indefatigable in his endeavours to sustain at once the cause of justice and the renown of his Sovereign, a character worthy of the Talbots ; and although it does not appear from history, that he interested himself so much for Mary's preservation ; yet he was known to have treated her very mildly, and with much friendship, when in his custody.

Paulet is upright and inflexible in what he thinks his duty ; though zealously attached to the reformed church, he disdains with generous indignation, to serve it by an action incompatible with honour, and hides under a rough outside, a

compassionate and forgiving heart. He is the representative of the sturdy Presbyterian of those days.

Burleigh, the deep, the subtle, unfeeling statesman, is yet a man of probity ; because acting from principle and conviction. The welfare of the State committed to his direction is the only object of his attention, the rule of all his actions.

The episode of Mortimer, is a masterly effort of creative genius : a character, though not directly authorised by history, yet strictly analogous to it. An attempt to save the Queen of Scots, of which there had been so many examples, is here wisely attributed to a youth, made highly interesting by the enthusiastic zeal which marks his character, and by his becoming unavoidably the destroyer of his mistress and himself. The Author drew this fictitious character as the symbol of the youth of that age. His manners are meant to be the type of the manners then prevailing.

The tournament described in the second act is in the true spirit of the times, when pedantry and the romance of chivalry were strangely mixed. A

tilt of very nearly this description, is mentioned by Pennant, in his *London*, and dated in that age. The entertainments given by Catherine of Medici, previous to the massacre of St. Bartholomew, were also similar to it.

The lyric passages in the beginning of the third act, are I fear, unattainable by any translator. All that I have been able to do, is, to preserve the original metre, and, at least, the thought. To render the expression word for word, I found impossible without altering the structure of the measure. They were intended to express the exultation of a prisoner, on being at length admitted into the open air, and to enjoy at least a temporal liberty. They appear too, to have another very pleasing aim, that of bringing the mind insensibly back to the origin of Tragedy; and perhaps a variation in the measure, was in no instance so happily introduced as in the present.

The meeting of the rival Queens is, indeed, contrary to historical fact; it is, however, by no means contrary to probability. This liberty is allowed the poet even by Aristotle; who, speaking

of the difference between the Historian and the Poet says, “ Ἀλλὰ τῷ διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γένομενα λεγείν, τὸν δὲ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο.” i. e. “ But this is the difference between them, that the one relates actions as they happened, the other as they might have happened.” A meeting had been once projected at York, and it was supposed that nothing but the vanity of Elizabeth, fearing to be eclipsed by Mary’s superior charms, prevented its accomplishment. The Author has, therefore, to render it more probable, enlisted into his service another powerful agent in the female breast, curiosity.— Actuated by this, Elizabeth consents to meet her rival. How much this meeting contributes to the hastening of the catastrophe it is unnecessary to observe.

The fiction of Melvil’s ordination, and of his administering as it were by stealth, the highest offices of the church, is happily imagined. By the confession of Mary, the mind of the spectator is put out of doubt as to the points of her guilt; he is fill’d with indignation at her *undeserved* sufferings, while her sincere repentance of the crimes *she*

has committed, fills him with sentiments of the deepest commiseration. In short, it appears to me, that her whole history, as here exhibited by the Poet, is admirably calculated to excite the *ἔλεος καὶ φόβον*, the pity and the fear so indispensibly required, by the Stagyrte, as the effects of tragic poetry; however, this matter has been misunderstood by many commentators of the great critic. For his whole meaning is, that the tragic Poet should seek, by the means of pity and fear, to purge as well these, as all other passions incident to humanity; by pointing out proper objects for pity and terror, virtually to teach what objects are unworthy, and thus to attain the height of moral virtue, which Socrates and Plato declared to consist *ἐν τῷ χαίρειν καὶ λυπείσθαι οἷς δεῖ*, in rejoicing and grieving in what is worthy of it.

It has been objected against this Scene, that the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is indecent upon the Stage. If this representation were attended by any circumstances calculated to depreciate this religious solemnity,

I should be of the same opinion; but it is conducted with a dignity belonging to the holy office, and, by infusing awe into the minds of the spectators, persuades them the more of the sincerity of Mary's confession. Such a representation could only be indecent, where the sacred function was therein abased. Aristotle, though he preferred the interest arising from events, to that τῆς ὀψέως, or to that arising from the apparatus (what the French call spectacle), intends by no means to decry τὰ τῆς ὀψέως, when employed as auxiliaries. Add to this, that the machinery, on the effect of which he would not have the Poet depend, is that of mere decoration. Here, indeed, is a *Deus ex machinâ*: but surely also, a *dignus vindicenodus*. In the present case, it secures the compassion of the spectator, and thereby conduces much to the interest of the catastrophe. The Greeks, were a polished people, and the masters of mankind, in the perfection of tragedy. It was by them, derived from their religious rites; they thought its intimate connection with religion, was necessary to its attaining the ends proposed by it—it was to

them, not only a moral and political, but also a sacred poem. It is no objection to an imitation of them, that they were heathens ; their morality was good, and the people, on whom the Stage was to operate, had the most exalted ideas of their religious rites ; exposed, as their religion justly was, to objections of every kind, they still thought, it was recommended, rather than depreciated by a public representation of its ceremonies.—Shall we Christians, have a less exalted idea of the doctrines of our faith ?

Immediately before her final exit, Mary observes Lord Leicester, amongst those who surround her. The few words, which she then speaks to him, have been construed into a bitterness, unbecoming of her situation, as an absolved penitent. I see no bitterness in the passage ; however meek, she must have been impressed with a sense of Leicester's treachery ; and how could she punish him more mildly, than by simply placing it in his view, and still wishing him, if possible, to be happy ? She must be considered, from the moment of her absolution, as in the service of virtue ; she would

reclaim him; she reproaches him not; she makes him reproach himself.

The only circumstance I could have wished otherwise, is the appearance of Elizabeth, in the fifth act, after the catastrophe. I was well aware that the ancient unities were not strictly applicable to the present arrangement of the Stage; yet, I must own, it appeared to me at first, a too great violation of the unity of place. Upon reflection, however, I am of another opinion. The distance is here purely accidental; there is no moral necessity for the scene of Mary's imprisonment, being at such a distance from the residence of Elizabeth. Had it been in any place of confinement in or near London, the impropriety would have been at least diminished, if not entirely obviated. The Queen of Scotland had received her punishment; she was innocent as to the crime she was accused of; yet, the great principle of distributive justice, is thereby exemplified. It seemed also necessary to shew the situation of her antagonists, particularly of Elizabeth; who, after this arbitrary act, is equally deserted by her

real and pretended friends. So convinced was Voltaire of the necessity of shewing the situation of the criminal, and at the same time so blind to the only mean of accomplishing it, that he makes his Mahomet, in a most artificial speech, describe minutely the horrors of his situation. I need not say how unnatural it is, to make the person under the immediate pressure of calamity, enter into the detail of his own sufferings.—Such reflections are natural for the spectator, and to him they are entirely left in Schiller's *Mary Stuart*.

The Author, as well as myself, wished this Piece to be acted upon the English Stage. It was not yet finished, when we made the offer of it; which was not even answered. I hope, however, that my translation will not be found to have so mutilated the merits of the original, that the principle of Aristotle will not here too maintain its ground. He says, “*Ἡ γὰρ τῆς τραγωδίας δύναμις, καὶ ἄνευ ἀγῶνος, καὶ ὑποκριτῶν ἐστίν.*” For the force of tragedy exists even without the help of representation and actors.

THE TRANSLATOR.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Elizabeth, Queen of England.

Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, a Prisoner in England.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury.

William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, Lord High-Treasurer.

Earl of Kent.

Sir William Davison, Secretary of State.

Sir Amias Paulet, Keeper of Mary.

Sir Edward Mortimer, his Nephew.

Count L'Aubespine, the French Ambassador.

Count Bellievre, Envoy Extraordinary from France.

O'Kelly, Mortimer's Friend.

Sir Drue Drury, another Keeper of Mary.

Sir Andrew Melvil, her House-Steward.

Burgoyne, her Physician.

Hannah Kennedy, her Nurse.

Margaret Curl, her Attendant.

Sheriff of the County.

Officer of the Guard.

French and English Lords.

Soldiers.

Servants of State, belonging to Elizabeth.

Servants and Female Attendants of the Queen of Scots.

ERRATA.

Page 5, line 4, *for* bounds, *read* Bonds.

— ib. — 6, *for* bounds, *read* bonds.

— ib. — 8, *for* This realm against, *read* This realm, and
'gainst.

— 10, — 2, *for* You shall know, &c. *read* Sir, you shall
know, &c.

MARY STUART.

ACT I.

Scene.—A COMMON APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE OF
FOTHERINGHAY.

*Hannah Kennedy contending violently with Paulet, who
is about to break open a Closet; Drury with an Iron
Crow.*

KENNEDY.

How now, sir? what's this new temerity?
Back from this closet.—

Paul. Say, whence came the jewels?
They from the upper story were thrown down:
They were intended, that we know, to bribe
The gard'ner:—curse on woman's wiles! In spite
Of all my care, my studious care, still treasures

In secret. Where such precious things are hid,
Lie, without doubt, still more.—

[breaks open the closet, and searches.]

Ken. Back, bold intruder;—

Here are deposited my lady's secrets.—

Paul. 'Tis even that I seek. *[pulling papers forth.]*

Ken. But trifling papers;
But the amusements of an idle pen,
To shorten the sad tediousness of bondage.

Paul. In idle hours, the evil spirit's busy.

Ken. Those writings are in French.—

Paul. So much the worse!

That is the language of the foe of England.

Ken. Copies of letters to the Queen of England.

Paul. I will deliver them :—what glitters here?

[pulling forth jewels from a secret compartment.]

A royal diadem so richly set——

With stones, and with the fleurs-de-lys of France!

[giving it to his companion.]

Here, take it, Drury, lay it with the rest.—

[Drury goes.]

And ye have found the means to hide from us
Such costly things, and screen them, till this moment,
From our inquiring eyes?

Ken. Oh! how disgraceful

The violence which we are forced to suffer!

Paul. As long as she possesses, she is hurtful;
For in her hands all things are turn'd to arms.

Ken. [*supplicating.*] O, sir! be merciful; deprive
us not

Of this last ornament which grac'd our life.
Oft can the view of ancient grandeur cheer
The sad depressed captive—all beside
You have despoil'd us of.—

Paul. It is preserv'd
In careful hands, and when the proper time
Is come, it will be faithfully restored.

Ken. Who could imagine in these naked walls
A royal residence? Where is the throne?
Where the imperial canopy of state?
Must she then set her tender foot, that's us'd
To softest treading, on this common floor?
Ignoble pewter serves the royal table;—
No lady in the land but would disdain it.

Paul. 'Twas thus at Stirling, Darnley ate; while she
Quaff'd with her paramour the golden cup.

Ken. The poor assistance of a looking-glass
Has been refus'd.—

Paul. As long as she beholds
Her own vain image, she will never cease
To hope, and crown her hopes with deeds of treason.

Ken. Books are denied her to divert her mind.—

Paul. The Bible's read to her to mend her heart.

Ken. And e'en her lute is ta'en from her.—

Paul. Because
She chose to tune it to lascivious airs.

Ken. Is this a lot for her, who has been bred
So tenderly, a queen e'en in her cradle;
Who, rear'd in Catherine's luxurious court,
Enjoy'd the plenitude of every pleasure?
Suffice it to have robb'd her of her power,
Must ye then envy her its paltry tinsel?
A generous heart may learn, at last the lesson
To bow itself beneath its great misfortunes;
But yet it cuts one to the soul, to part
At once with all life's little outward trappings!

Paul. These are the things that turn the human
heart
To vanity, which should collect itself
In penitence;—for a lewd, vicious life,
Want and abasement are the only penance.—

Ken. And even if her tender youth did fail,

Her reckoning's with God and her own heart :—

There is no judge in England over her.

Paul. There is she judg'd, where she transgress'd
the laws.

Ken. Her narrow bounds restrain her from trans-
gression.

Paul. And yet she found the means to stretch her
arm

Into the world from out these narrow bounds,

And, with the torch of civil war, t' inflame

This realm against our queen, whom God preserve,

To arm her murderous bands. Did she not rouse

From out these walls, the malefactor Parry,

And Babington, to the detested deed

Of regicide? And did this iron grate

Prevent her from decoying to her toils

The virtuous heart of Norfolk? Saw we not

The first, best head, in all this island, fall

A sacrifice for her upon the block?—

The noble house of Howard fell with him.—

And did this sad example terrify

These mad adventurers, whose rival zeal

Plunges for her into this deep abyss?

The bloody scaffold bends beneath the weight

*Of her new daily victims; and we ne'er
Shall see an end till she herself, of all*

The guiltiest, be offer'd up upon it.

O! curse upon the day, when England stretch'd
Its hospitable arms towards this Helen.

Ken. Did England then receive her hospitably?

Her, the unhappy one, who, from the day

When she first set her foot within this realm,

And, as a suppliant, a banish'd queen,

Came to implore protection from her sister,

Has been imprison'd, 'gainst the law of nations,

And royal dignity, to weep away

The fairest years of youth in strictest thralldom.

Who now, when she hath suffer'd every thing,

Which in imprisonment is hard and bitter,

Is summon'd to the bar, like common miscreants,

Accus'd disgracefully, and forc'd to plead

For life and honour—an anointed queen.

Paul. She came as murd'ress hither; driven away

By her own people; banish'd from that throne

Which she, with such misdeeds, so oft disgrac'd.—

Sworn against England's welfare came she hither,

To call the Spanish times of bloody Mary

Back to this land, to make us Catholics,

And sell us to the false deceitful French.—
 Say, why disdain'd she to subscribe the treaty
 Of Edinburgh, to give up her pretensions
 To England; and thus, with *one single word*
 Trac'd by her pen, to ope her
 No:—she had rather live in vile
 And see herself ill-treated, than abandon
 The hollow dignity of this poor title.—
 Why did she so? Because she puts her trust
 In cunning wiles, and the disgraceful arts
 Of treach'rous plots; and, spinning mischief, hopes
 To conquer from her prison all this island.

Ken. You banter, sir, and add these bitter mockings
 To your severity:—that *she* should dream
 Such dreams; *she*, who is here immured alive,
 To whom no sound of comfort, not a voice
 Of friendship comes from her beloved country;
 Who hath so long beheld no human face,
 But her stern jailor's brows, and sees herself
 Condemn'd anew to a still harder durance,
 And that fresh bars are multiplied around her!

Paul. No iron-grate is proof against her wiles.—
 How do I know these bars are not fil'd through?
 How that this chamber's floor, these walls so strong

Without, may not be hollow from within,
 And let in felon treach'ry when I sleep?—
 Accursed office, that's intrusted to me
 To guard this cunning mother of all ill !
 Fear rouses me from sleep; and in the night
 I, like a troubled spirit, roam and try
 The strength of every bolt, and put to proof
 Each guard's fidelity :—I see, with trembling,
 Th' arrival of each morn, which may confirm
 My apprehensions :—yet thank God, thank God,
 There's hope that it will now soon have an end ;
 For rather would I at the gates of hell
 Stand sentinel, and guard the dev'lish host
 Of damned souls, than this deceitful queen.

Ken. Here comes the queen.

Paul. Christ's image in her hand,
 Pride, and all worldly lusts within her heart.

Enter Mary veiled, a Crucifix in her hand.

Ken. [*hastening towards her*] O queen! they trample
 on us quite; there is
 No end of tyranny, of base oppression;

And each new day heaps new indignities,
New sufferings on thy crowned head.

Mary. Be calm—

Say, what has happ'd anew.—

Ken. See here! thy closet

Is forc'd;—thy papers,—and thy only treasure,

Which with such pains we had secur'd, the last

Poor remnant of thy bridal ornaments

From France, is in his hands:—thou hast no
mark

Of royalty remaining—art quite plundered!

Mary. Hannah! collect your spirits, and believe
me,

'Tis not this tinsel which can make a queen:—

Basely indeed they may behave to us,

But they cannot debase us.—I have learnt

To use myself to many a change in England;

I can support this too.—Sir, you have ta'en

By force, what I this very day intended

To have deliver'd to you. There's a letter

Amongst these papers, for my royal sister

Of England—pledge me, sir, your word of honour,

To give it to her majesty's own hands,

And not to the deceitful care of Burleigh.

Paul. I shall consider what is right to do.

Mary. You shall know its contents—in this letter

I beg a favour, a great favour of her,—
That she herself will give me audience,—
She, whom I ne'er have seen.—I have been summon'd
Before a court of men, whom I can never
Consider as my equals, and to whom
My heart denies its confidence :—the queen
Is of my family, my rank, my sex ;
To her the sister, her the queen, the woman,
Can I alone unbosom what I feel.

Paul. Too oft, my lady, have you plac'd your
fate,

Your honour in the hands of men, who were
By far less worthy your respect than these.

Mary. I, in the letter, beg another favour,
And surely nought but inhumanity,
Can here reject my prayer.—These many years
Have I, in prison, miss'd the church's comfort,
The blessing of the sacraments :—I cannot
Suppose that she, to whom I owe the loss
Of crown and liberty, who seeks my life,
Would also shut the gates of heaven against me.

Paul. The Dean of Peterborough will attend.—

Mary. [*interrupting him with vivacity*] What is the dean to me? I ask the aid

Of one of my own church—a catholic priest.

Paul. That is against the publish'd laws of England.—

Mary. The laws of England are no rule for me.—
I am not England's subject; I have ne'er
Consented to its laws, and will not bow
Before their cruel and despotic sway.—
If you will, to th' unexampled rigour
Which I have suffer'd, add this new oppression,
I must submit to what your power ordains;
Yet will I raise my voice in loud complaints:—
And I desire a public notary,
And secretaries, to draw up my will—
My sorrows, and this tedious sad confinement,
Prey on my life—my days, I fear, are number'd—
I feel that I am near the gates of death.

Paul. These serious contemplations well become you.—

Mary. And know I then, that some dispatchful hand

May not abridge this tedious work of sorrow?

I would indite my will, and make disposal
Of what belongs to me.

Paul. This liberty
May be allow'd you, for the Queen of England
Will not enrich herself with your poor spoils.

Mary. I have been parted from my faithful women,
And from my servants ;—tell me, sir, where are they?
What is their fate ? I can indeed dispense
At présent with their service, yet should I
Be eased, by knowing that these faithful ones
Are not exposed to sufferings and want !

Paul. Your servants you again shall see ; again
Shall see whatever has been taken from you :
All, when the hour is come, shall be restored. [*going.*]

Mary. And will you quit me thus, sir, thus again,
And not relieve my fearful anxious heart
From the fell torments of uncertainty ?
Thanks to the vigilance of your dependents,
I am divided from the world ;—no sound
Can reach me through these prison-walls ;—my fate
Lies in the hands of those who wish my downfall.
A painful tiresome month is pass'd already,
Since, from the queen, the high commissioners
Surprised me in this castle, and erected

Without an advocate, from
Before their unexampled court, to answer
Artful premeditated accusations.
—They came like ghosts—like ghosts again they
vanish'd,

And since that day all mouths are clos'd to me.
In vain I seek to construe from your brows
Which hath prevail'd—my cause's innocence
And my friend's zeal—or my foe's cursed counsel.
O! break at last your silence—let me know
What I have still to fear, and what to hope.

Paul. Close your accounts with heaven.

Mary. From heaven I hope
Heaven's mercy, sir;—and from my earthly judges
I hope, and still expect, the strictest justice.

Paul. Justice, depend upon it, will be done you.

Mary. Is the suit ended, sir?

Paul. I cannot tell.

Mary. Am I condemn'd?

Paul. I know of nothing, lady.

Mary. Sir, a good work fears not the light of day.

Paul. The day will shine upon it, doubt it not.

Mary. Dispatch is here the fashion :—is it meant
The murd'rer shall surprise me, like the judges?

Paul. Cherish the thought that 'tis so—he will then
Find you prepared much better than at present.

Mary. [*after a pause*] Sir, nothing can surprise
me, which a court,
Inspired by Walsingham's and Burleigh's hatred,
May venture to decree :—I am aware,
At the same time, how far the Queen of England
May dare to act in confirmation of it.

Paul. The sovereigns of England have no fear
But for their conscience, and their parliament.—
What justice hath decreed, her fearless hand
Will execute before collected worlds.

*Enter Mortimer, and, without paying attention to the
Queen, addresses Paulet.*

Mort. You're ask'd for, uncle.

*[he retires in the same manner. The Queen remarks
it, and turns towards Paulet, who is about to
follow him.]*

Mary. Sir, one favour more :—
If you have aught to say to me—from you
I can bear much—I honour your grey head—

But cannot bear that boy's presumptuous boldness—
Screen me in future from his savage manners.

Paul. I prize him e'en for that which makes you
hate him :—

He is not, truly, one of those poor fools,
Whom a false woman's tear can mollify—
He has seen much—has been in Rome and Paris,
And brings us back his true old English heart.
Lady, your cunning arts are lost on him. [Exit.

Ken. And dares the ruffian venture to your face
Such language!—O, 'tis hard!—'tis past endurance.

Mary. [lost in reflection.] In the fair moments of
our former splendour

We lent to flatt'ers a too willing ear ;—
It is but just and fit, that we should now
Be forced to hear the earnest voice of censure.

Ken. How, so depress'd, so spiritless, my queen,—
You, who before so gay, so full of hope,
Were used to comfort me in my affliction ?
Till now, I rather was obliged to blame
Your levity, than your too heavy sadness.

Mary. I know him well—it is the bleeding shade
Of Darnley, of my husband, which arises
From his sepulchral vault, and never will,

No, never will he make his peace with me
Until the measure of my woes is full.

Ken. What thoughts!—

Mary. O! you forget it—I cannot—
I have a faithful memory—'tis this day
Another wretched anniversary
Of that regretted, that unhappy action—
Which I must celebrate with fast and penance.

Ken. Dismiss at length in peace this evil spirit.
A penitence of many a heavy year,
Of many a sufferer, has atoned the deed:
The church, which holds the key of absolution,
Pardons the crime, and heav'n itself's appeas'd.

Mary. This long atoned crime arises fresh
And bleedings from its lightly cover'd grave—
My husband's spirit ranges for revenge—
No sacring bell can exorcise this spirit—
No host in holy hands can quiet it.

Ken. You did not murder him—'twas done by
others.

Mary. But it was known to me;—I suffer'd it
And lured him, flatt'ring, to the toils of death.

Ken. Your youth excuses you—your tender
years—

Mary. So young, and so untender—to weigh down
My infant years with this so heavy crime!

Ken. You were provok'd by bloody injuries,
And by the rude presumption of that man,
Whom out of darkness, like the hand of heav'n,
Your love drew forth, and above all exalted;
Whom through your bridal chamber you conducted
Up to your throne, and with your lovely self,
And your hereditary crown, distinguish'd:—
Your work was his existence, and your grace
Bedew'd him like the gentle rains of heav'n.
Could he forget, that his so splendid lot
Was the creation of your gen'rous love?
Yet did he, worthless as he was, forget it.
With base suspicions, and with brutal manners,
He wearied your affections, and became
An object of deserv'd disgust to you:—
Th' illusion, which till now had overcast
Your judgment, vanish'd; angrily you fled
His soul embrace, and gave him up to scorn.
And *he*, did he attempt to win again
Your favour? Did he implore your pardon?
Did he, as 'twere his duty so to do,
Assure you on his knees of his repentance?

No; the base wretch defied you:—he, who was
 Your bounty's creature, wish'd to play your king,
 And strove, through fear, to force your inclination.
 Before your eyes he had your fav'rite singer,
 Poor Rizzio, murder'd: you did but avenge
 With blood, the bloody deed——

Mary. And bloodily,
 I fear, too soon 'twill be aveng'd on me:—
 You seek to comfort me, and you condemn me.

Ken. You were not, when this deed was perpetrated,
 Yourself—belong'd not to yourself—the fire
 Of a blind frantic passion then possess'd you,
 And bound you to a terrible seducer,
 The wretched Bothwell;—the despotic man
 Rul'd you with wilful masculine presumption,
 And heated with his philters, and the arts
 Of hell, your passions.

Mary. All the arts he us'd
 Were his superior strength, and woman's weakness.

Ken. No, no, I say:—the most pernicious spirits
 Of hell must have been call'd upon by him,
 To cast this mist before your waking senses.
 Your ear was no more open to the voice
 Of friendly warning, and your eyes were shut

To decency; soft female bashfulness
 Deserted you; those cheeks, which were before
 The seat of shame-fac'd blushing modesty,
 Glow'd with the flames of unrestrain'd desire:
 You cast away the veil of secrecy,
 And the flagitious daring of the man
 O'ercame your nat'ral coyness: you expos'd
 To public view, unblushing, your dishonour:
 You let the murderer, whom the people follow'd
 With curses, through the streets of Edinburgh
 Before you bear the royal sword of Scotland
 In triumph: you with armed bands surrounded
 Your parliament: and, in the very temple
 Of Justice, by this shameless pantomime,
 You forc'd the judges of the land to clear
 The murderer of murder. You went farther—
 O God!

Mary. Conclude—nay, pause not—say I gave him
 For this, my hand in marriage at the altar.

Ken. O let an everlasting silence veil
 This deed! it is too dreadful, too revolting—
 It was the deed of a lost profligate:—
 Yet you, I know, are no lost profligate.
 'Twas I who rear'd your youth—your heart is fram'd

For tender softness : open are its feelings
 To shame ; and levity's your only fault.
 I do repeat it, there are evil spirits,
 Who sudden fix in man's defenceless breast
 Their fatal residence, and there delight
 To act their dev'lish deeds : then hurry back
 Unto their native hell, and leave behind
 Remorse and horror in the sullied bosom.
 Since this misdeed, which blackens thus your life,
 You have done nothing ill ; your conduct has
 Been virtuous ; I can witness your amendment.—
 Take courage, then ; with your own heart make peace.
 Whate'er you may repent of, here in England
 You are not guilty. Not Elizabeth,
 Not England's parliament can be your judge.
 Here *might* oppresses you :—you may present
 Yourself before this self-created court
 With all the fortitude of innocence.

Mary. I hear a step approaching.

Ken. 'Tis the nephew—

Retire.

Enter Mortimer, approaching cautiously.

Mort. [*to Kennedy.*] Step to the door, and watch
with care;

I have important business with the Queen.

Mary. [*with dignity.*] I charge thee, Hannah, go not
hence—stay here.

Mort. Fear not, my gracious lady,—learn to know
me. [*he gives her a card.*]

Mary. [*she examines it, and starts back astonished.*
Heav'ns! what is this?—

Mort. [*to Kennedy.*] Retire, good Kennedy;
See that my uncle comes not unawares.

Mary. [*to Kennedy, who hesitates, and looks at the
Queen inquiringly.*] Go in; do as he bids you.
[*Kennedy retires with signs of wonder.*]

Mary. From my uncle
In France, the worthy Cardinal of Lorrain?
[*she reads.*]

“ Confide in Mortimer, who brings you this;

“ You have no truer friend than him in England.”

[*looking at him with astonishment.*]

Is't possible? And is it no delusion

Which cheats my sight? And find I then a friend
 So near, when I conceiv'd myself abandon'd
 By the whole world? And find I him in you,
 The nephew of my jailer, whom I thought
 My most inveterate enemy?

Mort. [*kneeling.*] O pardon,
 My gracious lady, for the hated mask,
 Which it has cost me pain enough to wear;
 And yet through that alone am I enabled
 To see you, and to bring you help and rescue.

Mary. Arise, Sir; you astonish me; I cannot
 So suddenly emerge from the abyss
 Of wretchedness to hope: let me conceive
 This happiness, that I may credit it.

Mort. Our time is precious: I expect each moment
 My uncle, whom a hated man attends:
 Hear then, before his terrible commission
 Surprizes you, how heav'n prepares your rescue.

Mary. A wonder 'tis of heav'n's omnipotence.

Mort. Allow me of myself to speak.

Mary. Speak, Sir.

Mort. I had already counted twenty years,
 Bred up, my Queen, in the most rigid duties,
 And having suck'd, e'en with my mother's milk,

A deadly hate to Papacy, when led
 By a strong, irresistible desire
 For foreign travel, I resolv'd to leave
 My country and its puritanic faith
 Far, far behind me : I then flew through France
 With rapid speed, and sought with eager wish
 The boasted plains of Italy. It was
 The time of the great Jubilee :—the crowds
 Of swarming palmers fill'd the public roads ;
 Each image was adorn'd with garlands ; 'twas
 As if all human kind were wand'ring forth
 In pilgrimage towards the heav'nly kingdom.
 The tide of the believing multitude
 Bore me too onward with resistless force,
 Into the streets of Rome. What was my wonder,
 As the magnificence of stately columns
 Rush'd on my sight ! the vast triumphal arches,
 The Colissœum's grandeur, with amazement
 Struck my admiring senses ; the sublime
 Creative spirit held my soul a pris'ner
 In this fair world of wonders it had fram'd.
 Till now, the arts had never work'd on me,
 The church that rear'd me hates the charms of sense ;
 It tolerates no image, it adores

But the unseen, th' incorporeal word.
 What were my feelings then, as I approach'd
 The threshold of the churches, and ent'ring,
 Heard heav'ns harmonies floating in the air :
 While from the walls and high-wrought roofs the forms
 Celestial beamed in fulness of perfection.—
 When the most High, most Glorious, pervaded
 My captivated sense in real presence !
 And when I saw the godlike visions,
 The Salutation, the Nativity,
 The holy Mother, and the Trinity's
 Descent, the luminous Transfiguration :
 At last I glad beheld the Pope, in all
 The glory of his office, bless the people !
 O ! what's the pageantry of gold and jewels
 With which the kings of earth adorn themselves !
He is alone surrounded by the Godhead ;
His mansion is in truth an heav'nly kingdom,
 For not of earthly moulding are these forms !
Mary. O ! spare me, Sir ; no further—spread no
 more
 Life's verdant carpet out before my eyes,
 For I am wretched, and a prisoner.
Mort. I was a prisoner too, my Queen ; but quick

My prison-gates flew open ; when at once
 My spirit felt its liberty, and hail'd
 The smiling dawn of life. I learn'd to burst
 Each narrow prejudice of education,
 To crown my brows with never-fading garlands,
 And mix my joy with the rejoicing crowd.
 Full many noble Scots, who saw my zeal,
 Encourag'd me, and with the lively French
 They kindly led me to your princely uncle,
 The Cardinal Archbishop.
 What a man !
 How learn'd, how clear, how manly, how sublime !
 He's born to regulate the human mind !
 The very model of a royal priest ;
 A ruler of the church without an equal !

Mary. Have you then seen the much lov'd, honour'd
 man,

Who was the guardian of my tender years !
 O speak of him ! Does he remember me ?
 Does fortune favour him ? And blossoms still
 His life ? And does he still majestic stand,
 The rock on which the church of God is built ?

Mort. The holy man descended from his height,
 And deign'd to construe to me the deep lessons

Of the true church, and dissipate my doubts.
 He prov'd to me, that man's too plodding reason
 Serves but to lead him to eternal error:
 That what his heart is call'd on to believe,
 His eyes must see : that he who rules the church
 Must needs be visible ; and that the spirit
 Of truth inform'd the councils of the Fathers.
 How vanish'd then the fond imaginations
 And weak conceptions of my childish soul
 Before his conquering judgment, and the soft
 Persuasion of his tongue ! He then led me
 Forth to the altar, where I deliver'd
 Into his holy hands my abjuration.

Mary. You then are one of those so many thousands
 Whom he, with his celestial eloquence,
 Like the immortal preacher of the mount,
 Has turn'd, and led to everlasting joy !

Mort. The duties of his office call'd him soon
 To France, and I attended him to Rheims,
 Where, piously employ'd, the brotherhood
 Of Jesus fashion priests for England's church.
 There, 'mongst the Scots, I found the noble Morgan,
 And your true Lesley, Ross's learned bishop,
 Who pass in France the joyless days of exile.

I join'd with heartfelt zeal these worthy men,
 And fortified my faith. As I one day
 Roam'd through the Bishop's dwelling, I was struck
 With a fair female portrait; it was full
 Of touching, wond'rous charms; with magic might
 It mov'd my inmost soul, and there I stood
 Speechless, and overmaster'd by my feelings.
 "Well," cried the Bishop, "well may you behold
 "This face with such a mournful, fond emotion!
 "For the most beautiful of womankind,
 "Is the most lamentable too of women!
 "She suffers for our faith, and 'tis your country
 "Which is the sad scene of her sufferings!"

[Mary is in great agitation; he pauses.]

Mary. The upright man! no—I have not lost all,
 If such a friend remains in my misfortunes!

Mort. Then with heart-rending eloquence he painted
 Your martyrdom, the bloody enmity
 Of your oppressors, and at last he shew'd me
 Your pedigree, and prov'd your high descent
 From the great house of Tudor. He convinc'd me
 That you alone are born to reign in England,
 And not this base pretender, who, the fruit
 Of an adult'rous bed, was by her father,

Henry the Eighth, rejected as a bastard.
 He from my eyes remov'd delusion's mist,
 And taught me to lament you as a victim,
 To honour you as my true Queen, whom I,
 Deceiv'd, like thousands of my noble fellows,
 Had ever hated as my country's foe.
 I would not trust his evidence alone;
 I question'd learned doctors; I consulted
 The most authentic books of heraldry;
 And every man of knowledge, whom I ask'd,
 Confirm'd to me your claim's validity.
 And now I know the justice of that claim
 To England, is the spring of this injustice.
 This realm is your hereditary right,
 In which you innocently pine as pris'ner.

Mary. O this unhappy right!—'tis this alone
 Which is the source of all my sufferings.

Mort. About this time the news arriv'd at Rheims
 Of your removal from old Talbot's ward,
 And that you were committed to my uncle.
 It seem'd to me that this disposal mark'd
 The mystic, succ'ring hand of fav'ring heav'n:
 It seem'd to be a loud decree of fate,
 That it had chosen me to rescue you.

My friends agree with me; the Cardinal
 Imparts to me his counsel and his blessing,
 And tutors me in the hard task of feigning.
 The plan in haste digested, I commence
 My journey homewards, and ten days ago
 I landed, as you must have heard, in England.

[he pauses.]

I saw you, gracious Queen; saw you, yourself—
 Your picture 'twas no more! O what a treasure
 This castle's walls enclose! It is no prison:
 By far more splendid than the royal court
 Of England, 'tis a mansion for the gods.
 Happy, thrice happy he, whose envied lot
 It is to breathe one atmosphere with you!
 Her's is a prudent policy, who thus
 Has buried you so deep! Th' united youth
 Of England would rise up in mutiny,
 And not a sword lie quiet in its sheath:
 Rebellion, with his giant-head, would stalk
 Fierce through this land of peace, if once the Britons
 Beheld their Queen.

Mary. O! she indeed were happy,
 If ev'ry Briton saw her with your eyes!
Mort. Were each, like me, a witness of your sorrows,

Your meekness, and the noble patient courage
 With which you suffer these indignities—
 Emerge you not from all these bitter trials
 Like a true Queen? your prison's infamy,
 Hath it then soil'd the splendour of your beauty?
 You are depriv'd of all that graces life,
 Yet life and light eternal beam around you.
 I never set my foot upon this threshold,
 But that my heart is torn at once with anguish,
 And ravish'd with delight at gazing on you.
 Yet fearfully the fatal time approaches,
 And danger hourly growing presses on.
 I can delay no longer—can no longer
 Disguise the dreadful news.—

Mary. Is then my sentence
 Pronounc'd? Declare it freely—I can hear it.

Mort. It is pronounc'd! the two-and-forty
 judges
 Have giv'n the verdict, “ guilty,” and the houses
 Of lords and commons, with the citizens
 Of London, eagerly and urgently
 Demand execution:—’tis the Queen
 Alone who hesitates—but not, believe me,
 From feelings of humanity or mercy :

'Tis craftiness which guides her; and she hopes
To seem oblig'd to act this cruel part.

Mary. [*collected.*] Sir, I am not astonish'd—am not
frighten'd :

I have been long prepar'd for such a message.

I know my judges :—after the treatment

Which I have suffer'd, I can well conceive

That they cannot restore my liberty.

I know their aim : they mean to keep me here

In everlasting bondage, and to bury,

In the sepulchral darkness of my prison,

With me, my vengeance and my rightful claims.

Mort. No, Queen,—O ! no—no ;—they will not
stop there;

Oppression will not be content to do

Its work by halves :—as long as e'er you live,

~~Lives~~ too the terror of the Queen of England.

No dungeon can inter you deep enough ;

It is your death alone secures her throne.

Mary. Will she then dare to lay disgracefully
My crowned head beneath the bloody axe ?

Mort. She will most surely dare it, doubt it not.

Mary. And can she thus roll in the very dust,
Her own, and ev'ry monarch's majesty ?

Mort. She thinks on nothing now but present danger,

Nor looks to that which is so far remov'd.

Mary. And fears she not the dread revenge of France?

Mort. With France she makes an everlasting peace;
Gives to the Duke of Anjou throne and hand.

Mary. Will not the King of Spain then arm himself?

Mort. She fears not a collected world in arms,
If she but be at peace with her own people.

Mary. Were this a spectacle for British eyes?

Mort. This land, my Queen, has, in these latter days,
Seen many a royal woman from the throne
Descend, and mount the scaffold :—her own mother,
And Cath'rine Howard too, were sent this road;
And was not Lady Grey a crowned head?

Mary. [*after a pause.*] No, Mortimer, vain fears
have blinded you;

'Tis but the honest care of your true heart,
Which conjures up these empty apprehensions.

It is not, Sir, the scaffold that I fear :—

There are so many far more quiet means,
By which the Queen of England can secure

Her quiet 'gainst my claims : were it not easy,
 Before an executioner were found,
 To hire a murd'rer to rid her of me ?
 'Tis that which makes me tremble, Mortimer :
 I never lift the goblet to my lips
 Without an inward shudd'ring, that the draught
 May have been mingled by my sister's love.

Mort. No :—neither open nor disguised murder
 Shall e'er prevail against you :—fear no more ;
 All is prepar'd ;—twelve nobles of the land
 Are my confederates, and to-day have pledg'd,
 Upon the Sacrament, their faith to free you,
 With dauntless force, from this captivity.
 Count l'Aubespine, the French Ambassador,
 Knows of our plot, and offers his assistance :
 'Tis in his palace that we hold our meetings.
Exp. Mary. You make me tremble, Sir, but not for
 joy ;

An evil boding penetrates my heart.
 Know you then what you risk ? Are you not scar'd
 By Babington's and Tichburn's bloody heads,
 Expos'd as warnings upon London's bridge ?
 Nor by the ruin of those many victims
 Who have, in such attempts, found certain death,

And only made my chains the heavier?
 Fly hence, deluded, hapless youth!—fly hence
 While yet you may, if yet you may; if Burleigh,
 That crafty spy, hath not already trac'd
 Your schemes, and mix'd his traitors in your plot;
 Fly hence:—as yet, hath no successful champion
 Protected Mary Stuart.

Mort. I'm not scar'd
 By Babington's and Tichburn's bloody heads,
 Expos'd as warnings upon London's bridge;
 Nor by the ruin of those many victims
 Who have, in such attempts, found certain death:
 They also found therein immortal honour,
 And for your rescue, death is happiness.

Mary. It is in vain: nor force nor guile can save
 me:—

My enemies are watchful, and the might
 Is in their hands. It is not Paulet only
 And his dependant host; all England guards
 My prison gates; Elizabeth's free will
 Alone can open them.

Mort. Expect not that.

Mary. One man alone on earth can open them.

Mort. O! name me then that man!

Mary. Lord Leicester.

Mort. Leicester? [*starts back in wonder.*

The Earl of Leicester? your most bloody foe,
The fav'rite of Elizabeth?—through him—

Mary. 'Tis possible to save me, and alone
Through him is't possible. Go to him, Sir;
Freely confide in him; and, as a proof
That you are sent by me, give him this paper.

[*she takes a paper from her bosom: Mortimer draws
back, and hesitates to take it.*

My picture's in this letter:—take it, Sir;

I bear it long about me: the wary

Attention of your uncle cuts me off

From all communication;—you were sent

By my good angel. [*he takes it.*

Mort. O my Queen! this riddle,
Exp^lain it me.

Mary. Lord Leicester will resolve it:
Confide in him, and he'll confide in you.
Who comes?

Ken. [*entering hastily.*] 'Tis Paulet; and he brings
with him

A nobleman from court.

Mort. It is Lord Burleigh.

Collect yourself, my Queen, and strive to hear
The news he brings you, with indifference.

[he retires through a side door, and Kennedy follows him.]

Enter Lord Burleigh, and Paulet.

Paul. *[to Mary.]* You wish'd to-day, with certainty to know
Your fate : my Lord of Burleigh brings you now
This certainty : receive it with submission.

Mary. I hope with dignity, as it becomes
My innocence, and my exalted station.

Bur. I come deputed from the court of justice.

Mary. Lord Burleigh lends that court his willing
tongue,
Which was already guided by his spirit.

Paul. You speak as if no stranger to the sentence.

Mary. Lord Burleigh brings it me ; I therefore
know it.

Paul. It would become you better, Lady Stuart,
To listen less to hatred.

Mary. I but name
My enemy : I said not that I hate him.
Sir, to the business.

Bur. You have acknowledg'd
The jurisdiction of the two-and-forty.

Mary. My Lord, excuse me, if I am oblig'd
So soon to interrupt you. I acknowledg'd,
Say you, the competence of the commission?
I never have acknowledg'd it, my Lord;
Indeed I could not; could not give away
My own prerogative, the dignity
Of my own people, the inheritance
Of my own son, and ev'ry monarch's honour.
The very laws of England say I could not.
It is enacted by an English statute,
That ev'ry prisoner shall be accus'd
And tried before a jury of his equals;—
Who is my equal in this high commission?
Kings only are my peers.

Bur. But yet you heard
The points of accusation, answer'd them
Before the court——

Mary. 'Tis true, I was deceiv'd
By Hatton's crafty counsel:—he advis'd me,
For my own honour, and in confidence
In my good cause, and my most strong defence,
To listen to the points of accusation,

And prove their falsehood. *This*, my Lord, I did
From personal respect for the Lords' names,
Not their usurped charge, which I disdain.

Bur. Acknowledge you the court, or not, that is
Only a point of mere formality,
Which cannot stop the steady course of justice.
You breathe the air of England; you enjoy
The law's protection, and its benefits;
You therefore are its subject.

Mary. Sir, I breathe
The air within an English prison's walls:—
Is that to live in England; to enjoy
The law's protection? I do scarcely know
These laws, and never pledg'd my faith to keep them.
I am no member of this realm; I am
An independent, and a foreign Queen.

Bur. And think you, then, the hollow name of
Queen,
Can serve you as a charter to foment
In other countries, with impunity,
This bloody discord? Where would be the safety
Of Government, if the good sword of justice
Could not as easy smite the guilty forehead
Of the imperial stranger, as the beggar's?

Mary. I do not wish to be exempt from judgment,
My Lord, the judges only I disclaim.

Bur. The judges? how my Lady? Are they
then

Base wretches, snatch'd at hazard from the crowd?
Or shameless wranglers, selling truth and justice;
Oppression's willing hirelings, and its tools?
Are they not, then, the chiefest of this land.
Whose independence teaches them to dare
Be honest, and above the dread of princes,
Look down disdainfully on all temptation?
Are they not those, who rule a gen'rous people
In liberty and justice; men, whose names
I need but mention, to destroy each doubt,
Each mean suspicion, which is rais'd against them?
Stands not the rev'rend Primate at their head,
The pious Archbishop of Canterbury,
The learned Bromley, Lord High Chancellor,
And Howard, who conducts our conqu'ring fleets?
Say, then, could England's sovereign do more
Than, out of all the monarchy, elect
The very noblest, and appoint them judges
In this great suit? And were it probable
That party hatred could corrupt one heart;

Can forty chosen men unite themselves
To speak a sentence dictated by wisdom

Mary. [*after a short pause*] I hear with wonder
that tongue's eloquence

Which ever was so cautious to me.

How shall I, an unletter'd woman, cope
With a so learned, subtle orator?

Yes truly ; were these Lords as you describe them,
I must be mute, in this cause, beyond all hope,

Well lost, if such a court pronounce me guilty

But, Sir, these names, which you are pleas'd to praise,
These very men, whose weight you think will crush
me,

I see performing in the history
Of these dominions, very distant parts.

I see this high nobility of England

This grave majestic senate of the realm,

Like to an eastern monarch's vilest slaves,
Flatter my uncle Henry's sultan fancies

I see this noble rev'rend House of Lords,
Venal alike with the corrupted Commons ;

Make statutes and annul them, ratify

A marriage and dissolve it, as the voice
Of power commands : to-day it disinherits,

And brands the royal daughters of the realm
 With the vile name of bastards, and to-morrow
 Crowns them as queens, and leads them to the throne.
 I see them in four reigns, with pliant conscience,
 Four times abjure their faith; renounce the Pope
 With Henry, yet retain the old belief;
 Reform themselves with Edward, hear the mass
 Again with Mary; with Elizabeth,
 Who governs now, reform themselves again.

Bur. You say you are a stranger, Lady Stuart,
 To England's laws; but yet you seem'd well read
 In the sad history of its misfortunes.

Mary. And these men are my judges?

[as Lord Burleigh seems to wish to speak.

Lord High Treas'ner,
 Tow'rs you I will be just, be you but just
 Tow'rs me.-- 'Tis said, that you consult with zeal
 The good of England, and of England's Queen;
 Are honest, watchful, indefatigable:
 I will believe it: you are not conducted
 By private interest; the monarch's welfare,
 The realm's advantage, only governs you:
 Therefore, my noble Lord, you should the more
 Distrust your heart; should see that you mistake not

The welfare of the government, for justice.
 I doubt it not, that by your side is plac'd
 Full many an upright man among my judges :
 But they are Protestants, are eager all
 For England's quiet, and they sit in judgment
 On me, the Queen of Scotland, and the Papist.
 It is an ancient saying, that the Scots
 And English are unjust towards each other ;
 And hence the rightful custom, that a Scot
 Against an Englishman, an Englishman
 Against a Scot, cannot be heard in judgment.
 Necessity prescrib'd this cautious law ;
 Deep policy oft lies in ancient customs :
 My Lord, we must respect them. Nature cast
 Into the ocean these two fiery nations
 Upon this plank, and she divided it
 Unequally, and bade them fight for it.
 The narrow bed of Tweed alone divides
 These daring spirits ; often hath the blood
 Of the contending parties dy'd its waves.
 Threat'ning, and sword-in-hand these thousand years,
 From both its banks they watch the rival's motions,
 Most vigilant and true confederates,
 With ev'ry enemy of the neighbour state.

No foe oppresses England, but the Scot
 Becomes his firm ally; no civil war
 Enflames the towns of Scotland, but the English
 Add fuel to the fire: this raging hate
 Will never be extinguish'd till, at last,
 One parliament in concord shall unite them,
 One sceptre shall command throughout the isle.

Bur. And from a Stuart, then, should England hope
 This happiness?

Mary! O! why should I deny it?
 Yes, I confess, I cherish'd the fond hope,
 I thought myself the happy instrument
 To join, beneath the olive's shade, in freedom,
 And lasting happiness, two gen'rous nations!
 I little thought I should become the victim
 Of their old hate, their long-liv'd jealousy,
 And the sad flames of that unhappy discord,
 I hop'd at last to smother, and for ever:
 And, as my ancestor, great Richmond, join'd
 The rival roses after bloody contest,
 To join in peace the Scotch and English crowns.

Bur. An evil way it was to this good purpose,
 To set the realm on fire, and through the flames
 Of civil war to strive to mount the throne.

Mary. I wish'd not that:—by the great God of
heaven,

When did I strive at that? Where are your proofs?

Bur. I came not hither to dispute; your cause
Is no more subject to a war of words.

The great majority of forty voices
Hath sentenc'd that you have transgress'd the statute
Enacted the last year, and have incurr'd
Its penalty. [*producing the verdict.*]

Mary. Upon this statute, then,
My Lord, is built the verdict of my judges?

Bur. [*reading.*] Last year it was enacted “ If a
tumult

“ Or plot should rise in England, in the name
“ Or for the benefit of any claimant
“ To England's crown, that justice should be done
“ On such pretender, and the guilty party
“ Be prosecuted unto death.” Now, since
It has been prov'd——

Mary. Lord Burleigh, I can well
Imagine that a law expressly aim'd
At me, and only fram'd for my destruction,
May to my prejudice be us'd: O ! woe
To the unhappy victim, when the tongue,

Which dictates, executes at once the law.
 Can you deny it, Sir, that this same statute
 Was made for my destruction?

Bur. It was made
 And meant but as an wholesome warning to you :
 By your imprudence it became a pitfall.
 You saw the precipice which gap'd before you ;
 Yet, truly warn'd, you plung'd into the deep.
 You were confederate with Babington
 The traitor, and his murderous companions ;
 You knew of all, and with a steady plan
 Directed from your prison their black treason.

Mary. When did I that, my Lord? produce me
 then

The documents.

Bur. Those you have seen already ;
 They were, before the court, presented to you.

Mary. They're copies, written by another hand :
 Shew me the proof that they were dictated
 By me, that they proceeded from my lips,
 And in those very terms in which you read them.

Bur. Before his execution, Babington
 Confess'd they were the same which he receiv'd.

Mary. Why was he in his life-time not produc'd

Before my face? Why was he then dispatch'd
 So quickly, that he could not be confronted
 With her whom he accus'd?

Bur. Besides, my Lady,
 Your secretaries, Gurl and Nau, declare
 On oath, they are the very self-same letters
 Which, from your lips, they faithfully transcrib'd.

Mary. And on my menial servants' testimony
 I am condemn'd; upon the word of those
 Who have betray'd me, *me*, their rightful Queen?
 Who in that very moment, when they came
 As witnesses against me, broke their faith?

Bur. You said yourself, you held your coun-
 tryman
 To be an upright conscientious man.

Mary. I thought him such; but 'tis the hour of
 danger
 Alone, which tries the virtue of a man.
 He ever was an honest man, but weak
 In understanding; and his subtle comrade,
 Whose faith, observe, I never answer'd for,
 Might easily seduce him to write down
 More than he should; the rack may have compell'd
 him

To say and to confess more than he knew.
 He hop'd to save himself by this false witness,
 And thought it could not injure *me*, a Queen.

Bur. The oath he swore was free and unconstrain'd.

Mary. But not before my face ! how now, my Lord,
 Those are two witnesses who still are living,
 Let them appear against me face to face !
 Let them repeat what they have testified !
 Why am I then denied that privilege,
 That right, which e'en the murderer enjoys ?
 I know from Talbot's mouth, my former keeper,
 That in this reign a statute has been pass'd,
 Which orders, that the plaintiff be confronted
 With the defendant ; is it so, Sir Knight ?
 I e'er have known you as an honest man,
 Now prove it to me ; tell me, on your conscience,
 If such a law exists, or not, in England ?

Paul. 'Tis so, my Lady ; that's the law in England ;
 I must declare the truth.

Mary. Well then, my Lord,
 If I am treated by the law of England
 So hardly, when that law oppresses me,
 Say, why avoid the law of this same land,
 When 'tis for my advantage ? Answer me ;

Why was not Babington confronted with me?

Why not my servants, who are still both living?

Bur. Be not so hasty, Lady; 'tis not only
Your plot with Babington——

Mary. 'Tis that alone
Which arms the law against me; that alone
From which I'm call'd upon to clear myself.
Stick to the point, my Lord; evade it not.

Bur. It has been proved that you have corres-
ponded
With the Ambassador of Spain, Mendoza——

Mary. Stick to the point, my Lord.

Bur. That you have form'd
Conspiracies to overturn the fix'd
Religion of the realm; that you have call'd
Into this kingdom foreign pow'rs, and rous'd
All kings in Europe to a war with England.

Mary. And were it so, my Lord,—though 'tis
not so——

But let's suppose it were so : I am kept
Imprison'd here against all laws of nations.
I came not into England sword-in-hand;
I came a fugitive; and, in the arms
Of my imperial kinswoman, I claim'd

The sacred rights of hospitality.

But violence oppress'd me, and prepar'd

Chains for me, where I vainly hop'd protection.

Say, is my conscience bound towards this realm?

Have I then duties to fulfil tow'rs England?

I should but exercise a sacred right,

Deriv'd from sad necessity, if I strove

To burst these fetters, to encounter might

With might, to move and stir up ev'ry state

In Europe, to unite for my protection.

Whatever in a rightful war is just

And loyal, 'tis my right to exercise :

Murder alone, the secret bloody deed,

My pride forbids me, and my honest mind ;

Murder would stain me, would dishonour me :

Dishonour me, I say my Lord ! but not condemn
me ;

Not subject me to England's courts of justice ;

For 'tis not justice, 'tis but violence,

Which is the question between me and England.

Bur. [*significant.*] Talk not, my Lady, of the
dreadful right

Of pow'r : 'tis seldom on the pris'nex's side.

Mary. I am the weak one ; she the mighty one :—

'Tis well, my Lord ; let her then use her pow'r ;
 Let her then kill me : let me be the victim
 Of her security : but let her then
 Confess, that she has us'd her pow'r alone,
 And not contaminate the name of justice.
 Let her not borrow, from the laws, the sword
 To rid her of her hated enemy :
 Let her not clothe, in this religious garment,
 The bloody daring of licentious might :
 Let not these juggling tricks deceive the world.—

[returning the verdict.

Though, she may murder me ; she cannot judge me :—
 Let her no longer strive to join the fruits
 Of vice, with virtue's fair and angel-seeming ;
 But let her dare to seem the thing she is. *[Exit.*

Bur. She scorns us, she defies us ! will defy us,
 Ev'n at the scaffold's foot ; we cannot break
 This haughty heart ! Did then the dreadful sentence
 Surprise her ? Did you see her shed one tear,
 Or even change her colour ? She implores not
 Our mercy ; well she knows the wav'ring mind
 Of Queen Elizabeth : our fears alone,
 Inspire her courage.

Paul. Lord High Treasurer,

Take the pretext away which buoys it up,
 And you shall see this proud defiance vanish
 That very moment. I must say, my Lord,
 Irregularities have been admitted
 In these proceedings; Babington and Ballard
 Should have been brought, with her two secretaries,
 Before her, face to face.

Bur. No, Paulet, no!

That was not to be risk'd; her influence
 Upon the human heart is too ascendant;
 Too strong the female empire of her tears.
 Her secretary, Curl, if brought before her,
 And call'd upon to speak the weighty word
 On which her life depends, would straight shrink
 back,

And fearfully revoke his own confession.

Paul. The foes of England then will fill the world
 With odious noises; the solemnity
 Of these proceedings, to the minds of all,
 Will bear the marks but of more daring outrage.

Bur. That is the greatest torment of our Queen,
 That she can never 'scape the blame. O God!
 Had but this lovely mischief died before
 She set her faithless foot on English ground.

Paul. Amen, say I !

Bur. Had sickness but consum'd her !

Paul. England had been secur'd from much misfortune.

Bur. And yet, if she had died in nature's course,
The world would call us still her murderers.

Paul. 'Tis true, the world will think, in spite
of us,
Whatë'er it list.

Bur. Yet could it not be prov'd?
And it would make less noise.

Paul. Why, let it make
What noise it may ; it is not clam'rous blame,
'Tis righteous censure only, which can wound.

Bur. We know that holy justice cannot 'scape
The voice of censure, and the public cry
Is ever on the side of the unhappy :
Envy pursues the laurell'd conqueror ;
The sword of justice, which adorns the man,
Is hateful in a woman's hand ; the world
Will give no credit to a woman's justice,
If woman is the victim. 'Tis in vain
That we, the judges, speak what conscience dictates;
She has the royal privilege of mercy ;

She *must* exert it : 'twere intolerable,
Should she let justice take its full career.

Paul. And therefore——

Bur. Therefore should she live? O! no,
She must not live; impossible! 'tis this,
Ev'n this, my friend, which thus torments the Queen:
This scares all slumber from her eye; I read
Her soul's distracting contest on her brows;
She fears to speak her wishes, yet her looks,
Her silent looks, significantly ask,

“ Is there not one amongst my many servants

“ To save me from this sad alternative?

“ Must I then tremble in eternal fear

“ Upon my throne, or must I sacrifice

“ A Queen, my own relation, on the block?”

Paul. 'Tis even so; nor can it be avoided——

Bur. Well might it be avoided, thinks the Queen,
If she had only more attentive servants.

Paul. How more attentive?

Bur. Such as could interpret

A silent mandate?

Paul. What? A silent mandate!

Bur. Who, when a pois'nous adder is deliver'd

Into their hands, would keep the treach'rous charge,
As if it were a sacred precious jewel.

Paul. A precious jewel is the Queen's good name,
And spotless reputation : good, my Lord,
One cannot guard it with sufficient care.

Bur. When, out of Shrewsb'ry's hand, the Queen
of Scots
To Sir Amias Paulet's care was giv'n,
The meaning was——

Paul. I hope to God, my Lord,
The meaning was, to give the hardest charge
Into the purest hands : my Lord, my Lord !
By heav'ns, I had disdain'd this bailiff's office,
Had I not thought the weighty service ask'd
The vigilance of the best man in England.
Let me not think I am indebted for it
To any thing but my unblemish'd name.

Bur. Spread the report, she wastes ; grows sicker
still,
And sicker ; and expires at last in peace ;
Thus will she perish in the world's rememb'rance,
And your good name is pure.

Paul. But not my conscience.

Bur. Though you refuse us, Sir, your own assistance,
 You will not, sure, prevent another's hand.

Paul. No murderer shall e'er approach her threshold,
 Whilst she's protected by my household gods.

Her life's a sacred trust ; to me the head

Of Queen Elizabeth is not more sacred.

Ye are the judges ; judge, and break the staff ; •

And when 'tis time, then let the carpenter,

With axe and saw appear, to build the scaffold.

My castle's portals shall be op'd to him,

The sheriff, and the executioners :

As yet, she is entrusted to my care ; •

And, be assur'd, I will fulfill my trust.

She shall nor *do*, nor *suffer* what's unjust.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

Scene—LONDON; A HALL IN THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER.

The Earl of Kent, and Sir William Davison, meeting.

DAVISON.

Is that my Lord of Kent? return'd already?

Is then the tourney, the carousal over?

Kent. How now? Were you not present at the tilt?

Dav. My office hinder'd me.

Kent. Why then, Sir Knight,
You've lost the fairest shew which ever taste
Devis'd, or graceful dignity perform'd:
For beauty's virgin fortress was presented,
As by *Desire* invested; the Earl Marshall,
The Lord High Admiral, and ten other knights,
Belonging to the Queen, defended it,
And France's Cavaliers led the attack.
A herald march'd before the gallant troop,

And summon'd, in a madrigal, the fortress,
 And from the walls the Chancellor replied;
 And then th' artillery was play'd, and nosegays
 Breathing delicious essences, were shot
 From neat field-pieces; but in vain, the storm
 Was valiantly resisted, and *Desire*
 Was forc'd, unwillingly, to raise the siege.

Dav. A sign of evil boding, good, my Lord;
 For the French suitors.

Kent. Why, you know that this
 Was but in sport; when the attack's in earnest,
 The fortress will, no doubt, capitulate.

Dav. Believe you that? I never can believe it.

Kent. The hardest article of all is now
 Arrang'd, and France consents. Anjou's Duke
 Is satisfied to be allow'd to hold
 His holy worship in a private chapel;
 And openly he promises to honour
 And to protect the realm's establish'd faith.
 Had you but heard the bursts of satisfaction,
 Which, as this news was publicly announc'd,
 Through London's streets, in joyful shouts re-
 sounded!

'Twas e'er their fear, that the good Queen might die,

Without immediate issue of her body,
 And England bear again the chains of Rome,
 If Mary Stuart should ascend the throne.

Dav. This fear appears superfluous ; she goes
 Into the bridal chamber ; Mary Stuart
 Enters the gates of death.

Kent. The Queen approaches.

*Enter Elizabeth, led in by Leicester, Count L' Aubespine,
 Bellicre, Lords Shrewsbury and Burleigh, with other
 French and English gentlemen.*

Eliz. [*to L' Aubespine.*] Count, I am sorry for these
 noblemen,

Whose gallant zeal hath brought them over sea
 To these our coasts, that they must miss, with us,
 The splendour of the court of St. Germain's.
 Such pompous festivals of godlike state
 I cannot furnish, as the royal court
 Of France : a sober and contented people,
 Which crouds around me with a thousand blessings,
 As often as I publicly appear :
This is the spectacle which I can shew,
 And not without some pride, to foreign eyes.

The splendour of the noble ladies who
 In Cath'rine's beauteous garden bloom, would serve
 But to hide me, and my more modest merits.

L'Aub. The court of Westminster has but one
 lady

To shew th' astonish'd stranger ; but whatever,
 In the accomplish'd sex can charm the heart,
 Is seen united in her single person.

Bel. Great majesty of England, suffer us
 To take our leave, and to Anjou's Duke,
 Our royal master, bear the happy news.
 The hot impatience of his heart would not
 Permit him to remain at Paris ; he
 At Amiens awaits the joyful tidings ;
 And far as Calais reach his posts, to bring
 With winged swiftness the consent which, still
 We hope, your royal lips will graciously
 Pronounce, to his intoxicated ear.

Eli. Press me no further now, Count Bellievre,
 It is not now a time, and I repeat it,
 To kindle here, the joyful marriage torch.
 The heav'ns hang black and heavy o'er this land ;
 The garb of mourning would become me better
 Than the magnificence of bridal garments :

A fatal blow is aim'd against my heart;
 A blow which threatens to oppress my house.

Bel. Give us your promise only, gracious Queen;
 Let us not shape our course in desperation
 Homewards: let better days fulfill our hopes.

Eliz. Monarchs are but the slaves of their condition;
 They dare not hear the dictates of their hearts:
 My wish was ever to remain unmarried,
 And I had plac'd my greatest pride, my glory,
 In this, that it might be hereafter read
 Upon my tomb: "Here rests the virgin Queen."
 But yet my subjects will not this: they think,
 Ee'n now they often think upon the time,
 When I shall be no more: 'tis not enough,
 That blessings now are shower'd on this land,
 They ask a sacrifice for future blessings,
 And I must offer up my liberty,
 My virgin liberty, my sov'reign good,
 Unto my people's welfare, and a master
 Is thus impos'd upon me. 'Tis by this,
 I see, that I am nothing but a woman,
 In their regard; and yet I thought, that I,
 Had govern'd like a man, and like a king.
 Well wot I, that it is not serving God,

To quit the laws of nature, and that those
 Who here have rul'd before me, merit praise;
 That they have op'd the cloister-gates, and giv'n
 Thousands of victims, of ill taught devotion,
 Back to the duties of humanity.

But yet, a Queen, who hath not spent her days
 In fruitless, idle contemplation ; who,
 Without a murmur, indefatigable
 Performs the hardest of all duties, *she*
 Should be exempted, surely, from this law
 Of nature, which commands, that the one half
 Of human kind be subject to the other.

L'Aub. Great Queen, you have upon your throne
 done honour

To ev'ry virtue ; nothing now remains,
 But to the sex, whose greatest boast you are,
 To be the leading star, and give the great
 Example of its most appropriate duties.
 'Tis true, the man exists not who deserves
 That you should sacrifice your freedom to him ;
 Yet can descent, and rank, and manly beauty,
 With an heroic soul make mortal man
 Deserving of this honour—

Eliz. Without doubt,

My Lord Ambassadors, a marriage-union
 With France's royal son would do me honour:
 Yes, I acknowledge it without disguise,
 If it must be, if I cannot prevent it,
 If I must yield unto my peoples' prayers,
 And much I fear, they will o'erpower me;
 I do not know in Europe, any prince,
 To whom I'd sacrifice, with less reluctance,
 My greatest treasure, my dear liberty.
 Let this confession, satisfy your master.

Bel. It gives the *fairest* hope, and yet it gives
 Nothing *but* hope; my master wishes more.

Eliz. What wishes he? [*she takes a ring from her
 finger, and thoughtfully examines it.*] In this a
 Queen has not

One privilege above all other women.

This common token hints at common duty,
 And common servitude; the ring denotes
 Marriage, and 'tis of rings a chain is form'd.

Convey this present to his Highness; 'tis,
 As yet, no chain, it binds me not, as yet,
 But it may, perhaps, become a link to bind me.

Bel. [*kneeling.*] This present, in his name, upon
 my knees

I do receive, great Queen, and beg to press
 The kiss of homage on the gracious hand
 Which deigns to give it.

*Eliz. [to the Earl of Leicester, whom she, during the
 last speeches, had continually regarded.]*

By your leave, my Lord, *[she takes the blue ribbon from
 his neck,* and invests Bellicore with it.]*

Invest his Highness with this ornament,
 As I invest you with it, and receive you
 Into the duties of my gallant order.
 And, “Honi soit qui mal y pense.” Thus perish
 All jealousy between the two allies,
 And let the bond of confidence unite,
 Henceforth, the crowns of Britain and of France.

Bel. Most sov'reign Queen, this is a day of joy;
 O could it but be so for all, and that
 No sufferer might sorrow in this island.
 See! mercy beams upon thy brow; O! lady,
 Let the reflection of it's cheering light
 Fall on a wretched princess, who concerns
 Britain and France alike.

* Till the time of Charles the First, the Knights of the Garter wore the blue ribbon with the George, about their necks, as they still do the collars, on great days.

Eliz. No further, Count;
 Let us not mix two inconsistent things;
 If France desires in earnest my alliance,
 It must partake my cares; indeed, it must;
 Nor join in friendship with my foes.

L' Aub. It would
 Act most unworthily, e'en in thy eyes,
 If it, in this alliance, should forget
 This hapless Queen, the widow of its king;
 In whose behalf, its honour and its faith
 Are bound to plead for grace.

Eliz. In this respect,
 I know, as it becomes me, how to value
 This intercession; France therein fulfills,
 As a friend, his duties; and, he no doubt,
 Will now permit me too, to act as Queen.

*[she bows to the French Ambassadors, who, with the
 other gentlemen, retire respectfully.]*

Enter Burleigh, Leicester, and Talbot. The Queen takes her seat.

Bur. Illustrious sovereign, thou crown'st to day
The fervent wishes of thy people : now
We can rejoice in the propitious days
Which thou bestow'st upon us; and we look
No more with fear and trembling tow'rd the time
Which, charg'd with storms, futurity presented.
Now, but one only care disturbs this land;
It is a sacrifice which ev'ry voice
Demands; O! grant but this, and England's peace
Will be establish'd now and evermore.

Eliz. What wish they still, my Lord? speak.

Bur. They demand
The head of Mary Stuart;—if thou wilt
Secure thy people in the high enjoyment
Of liberty, and the fair light of truth,
So lately and so dearly earn'd, then *she*
Must be no more : if you will ease our minds
Of these eternal fears for thy dear life,
The enemy must fall : for well thou know'st,

That all thy Britons are not true alike :
 Roman idolatry has still its friends
 In secret, in this island, who foment
 The hatred of our enemies : their hearts
 All turn towards this Stuart ; they are leagu'd
 With the two plotting brothers of Lorrain,
 Th' invet'rate foes both of thy name and realm.
 'Gainst thee this raging faction hath declar'd
 A war of desolation, and they wage it
 With the deceitful instruments of hell.
 At Rheims, the Cardinal Archbishop's see,
There is the arsenal, from which they dart
 These light'nings ; *there's* the school of regicide ;
Thence, in a thousand shapes disguis'd, are sent
 Their secret missionaries to this island ;
 Their bold and daring zealots ; for from *thence*,
 Have we not beheld the third assassin,
 And inexhausted is the direful breed
 Of secret enemies in *this* abyss.

And there in Fotheringhay Castle sits
 The *Até** of this everlasting war,

* The picture of Até, the Goddess of Mischief, we are acquainted with from Homer, *Il. v. 91. 130. 1. 501.* She is a daughter of Jupiter, and eager to prejudice every one, even the immortal gods. She counteracted Jupiter himself, on which

Who, with the torch of love, spreads flames around;
 For her, who flatters each with the fair hope
 Of once possessing her; for her it is,
 That love-intoxicated youth devotes
 Itself to certain death; her rescue is
 The watch-word, and to place her on thy throne
 The aim; for this accurs'd house of Lorraine
 Denies thy sacred right; to them thou art
 A robber of the throne, and crown'd by fortune.
 By them this silly woman was deluded,
 Proudly to call herself the Queen of England:
 There is no peace with her, and with her house;
 Their hatred is too bloody, their offences
 Too heavy; thou must either act, or suffer;—
 Her life is death to thee, her death thy life.

account he seized her by her beautiful hair, and hurl'd her from
 heaven to the earth, where she, now striding over the heads of
 men, excites them to evil, in order to involve them in calamity.

Herder

Shakspeare has, in *Julius Cæsar*, made a fine use of this image:

“ And Cæsar’s spirit, ranging for revenge,
 “ With Até by his side, come hot from hell,
 “ Shall in these confines, with a monarch’s voice,
 “ Cry havock, and let slip the dogs of war.”

I need not point out to the reader, the beautiful propriety of in-
 troducing this evil spirit on this occasion.

Translator.

Eliz. My Lord, your^e bear a melancholy office ;
 I know the purity which guides your zeal,
 Know too that unadulterated wisdom
 Informs you ; yet this wisdom, when it calls
 For blood, I hate it in my inmost soul.
 Think of a milder counsel.—Good, my Lord
 Of Shrewsbury, now give us your opinion. .

Tal. Desire you but to know, most gracious
 Queen,

What is for your advantage, then I have
 Nought to add to what my Lord High Treas'rer
 Has urg'd ; for your welfare, let the sentence
 Be then confirm'd,—this is prov'd already.
 There is no surer method to avert
 The danger from your head, and from the state.
 If you'll not be advis'd concerning this,
 You can dismiss your council. We are plac'd
 Here as your counsellors, but to consult
 The welfare of this land, and with our knowledge,
 With our experience, are we bound to serve you !
 But, what is good and just : for this, my Queen
 You have no need of counsellors, your conscience
 Knows it full well, and it is written there.

Nay it were overstepping our commission
If we attempted to instruct you in it.

Eliz. Yet speak, my worthy Lord of Shrews-
bury,

'Tis not our frail understanding alone,
Our heart too feels it wants some sage advice.

Tal. Well did you praise the upright zeal which
fires

Lord Bureleigh's loyal breast ; my bosom too ;
Although my tongue be not so eloquent,
Beats with no weaker, no less faithful pulse :
Long may you live, my Queen, to be the joy
Of your delighted people, to prolong
Peace and its envied blessings to this realm.
This island never saw so happy days
Since it was govern'd by its native kings.
O let it never purchase its advantage
With its good name ; at least, may Talbot's eyes
Be clos'd, e'er this shall happen.

Eliz. God forbid
That we should ever sully our good name.

Tal. If so, you must adopt some other mean
To save these kingdoms, for the execution
Of Mary Stuart is an unjust mean.

You cannot upon her pronounce a sentence,
Who is not subject to you.

Eliz. Then, it seems,

My council and my parliament have err'd ;
Each bench of justice in this land's in error,
Which gave me, with one voice, this sov'reign right.

Tal. [*after a pause.*] The proof of justice lies not
in the voice

Of numbers ; England's not the world, nor is
Thy parliament the focus, which collects
The vast opinion of the human race.

This present England is no more the future,
Than 'tis the past ; as inclination changes

Thus ever ebbs and flows th' unstable tide
Of public judgment. Say not then, that thou

Must act as stern necessity compels thee,

That thou must yield to the importunate

Petitions of thy people ;—ev'ry moment

Thou can'st experience that thy will is free.

Attempt it, and declare, that thou hatest

Blood ; that thou wilt protect thy sister's life ;

Shew those who wish to give thee other counsels,

That *here* thy royal anger is not feign'd,

And thou shalt see how quick necessity

Can vanish, and what was titled justice
 Into injustice be converted : thou
 Thyself must judge, and thou alone: thou can'st not
 Lean on this feeble trembling reed, then follow
 The gracious dictates of thy tender heart.
 Hath not God planted rigour in the frame
 Of woman ; and the founders of this realm,
 Who to the female hand have not denied
 The reins of government, seem to intend
 Thereby, that rigour should not be the boon
 By which the kings of England should be known.

Eliz. Lord Shrewsbury's a fervent advocate
 For mine, and England's enemy ; I must
 Prefer those counsellors who wish *my* welfare.

Tal. Her advocates have an invidious task !
 None will, by speaking in her favour, venture
 To meet thy anger : suffer then, an old
 And faithful counsellor, (whom nought on earth
 Can tempt, on the grave's brink,) to exercise
 The pious duty of humanity.
 It never shall be said, that, in thy council,
 Passion and interest have giv'n their votes,
 And that 'twas mercy only which was silent :—
 All circumstances have conspir'd against her ;

Thou ne'er hast seen her face, and nothing speaks,
Within thy bosom, for the foreigner.

I do not take the part of her misdeeds;

They say she plann'd her husband's murder : true

It is, that she espous'd his murderer.

A grievous crime it was ; but then it happen'd

In a distressful, gloomy moment ; in

The anxious agony of civil war,

Where she, the weak one, saw herself surrounded

By disrespectful and impetuous vassals,

And sought her refuge in the rude embrace

Of him who seem'd the bravest and the strongest.

God knows what arts were us'd to overcome her !

For woman is a weak and fragile being.

Eliz. Woman's not weak ; there are heroic souls

Among the sex ; and, in my presence, Lord,

I do forbid to speak of woman's weakness.

Tal. Misfortune was for thee a rigid school ;

Thou wast not station'd on the sunny side

Of life ; thou saw'st no throne, from far, before thee ;

The grave was gaping for thee at thy feet.

At Woodstock 'twas, and in the tower's night,

'Twas *there* the gracious father of this land

Taught thee to know thy duty, from misfortune.

No flatt'rer sought thee there; there learn'd thy soul
 Free from the noisy world and its distractions,
 To commune with itself, to think apart,
 And estimate the real goods of life.
 No God protected this poor suff'rer :
 Transplanted in her early youth, and yet
 A tender child, to France, she saw the reign
 Of levity and inconsiderate folly ;
 There, in the court, of constant dissipation,
 She never heard the earnest voice of truth ;
 She was deluded by the glare of vice,
 And driven onward by the stream of ruin.
 Her's was the vain possession of a face,
 And blooming she outshone all other women,
 Not less in beauty, than in noble birth.

Eliz. Collect yourself, my Lord of Shrewsbury ;
 Think that we here in solemn council sit.
 These charms must surely be without compare,
 Which can engender, in an elder's blood,
 Such fire. My Lord of Leicester, you alone
 Are silent ; does the subject which has made
 Him eloquent, deprive you of your speech ?

Lei. Amazement ties my tongue, my Queen, to
 think

That they should fill thy ears with such alarms,
 And that the idle tales, which, in the streets
 Of London, terrify the cred'ulous people,
 Should reach th' enlighten'd circle of thy council,
 And occupy, in earnest, men of wisdom.
 Astonishment possesses me, I own,
 To think this lackland Queen of Scotland, she
 Who could not save her own poor throne, the jest
 Of her own vassals, and her country's refuse,
 Who, in her fairest days of freedom, was
 But thy despised puppet, should become
 At once thy terror, when a prisoner.
 What, in the name of God, can make her fearful?
 Is't that she claims these kingdoms; that the Guises
 Will not acknowledge thee as Queen? Did then
 Thy people's loyal fealty await
 These Guises' approbation? can these Guises,
 With their objections, ever shake the right
 Which birth hath giv'n thee; which, with one con-
 sent,
 The votes of parliament have ratified?
 And is not she, by Henry's will, pass'd o'er
 In silence? is it probable that England,
 As yet so bless'd in the new light's enjoyment,

Should throw itself into this papist's arms?
 From thee, the sov'reign it adores, desert
 To Darnley's murd'ress ! What will they then,
 These urgent men, who e'en in thy lifetime
 Torment thee with a successor; who think
 They cannot soon enough dispose of thee
 In marriage, to deliver church and state ?
 Stand'st thou not blooming there in youthful prime,
 While each step leads her tow'ards th'expecting tomb ?
 By heav'ns, I hope thou wilt full many a year
 Walk o'er her grave, and that without becoming,
 Thyself, the instrument of her sad end.

Bur. Lord Leicester hath not always held this
 tone.

Li. 'Tis true, I in the court of justice gave
 My verdict for her death ; here, in the council,
 I can consistently speak otherwise :
 Here, right is not the question, but advantage.
 Is this a time for dread of her, when France,
 Her only succour, has abandon'd her ?
 When thou preparest with thy hand to bless
 The royal son of France, when the fair hope
 Of a new, glorious stem of sovereigns
 Begins again to blossom in this land ?

Why hasten then her death ? She's dead already.

Contempt for her's the only death ; let not

Ill tim'd compassion call her into life.

'Tis therefore my advice to leave the sentence,

By which her life is forfeit, in full force.

Let her then live ; but let her trembling live

Beneath the axe, and, from the very hour

One arm be lifted for her, let it fall.

Eliz. [*rises.*] My Lords, I now have heard your
sev'ral thoughts,

And give you my best thanks for this your zeal.

With God's assistance, who the hearts of kings

Illumines, I will weigh your arguments,

And choose what seems to me the best.

My Lord [*to Burleigh.*]

High Treasurer, your honest fears, I know it,

Are but the offspring of your faithful care ;

But yet, my Lord of Leicester has said well ;—

There is no need of haste ; our enemy

Hath lost already her most dangerous sting,—

The mighty arm of France : the fear that she

Might quickly be the victim of their zeal

Will curb the blind impatience of her friends.

Enter Sir Amias Paulet, and Mortimer.

Eliz. There's Sir Amias Paulet; noble Sir,
What bring you us?

Paul. Most gracious Sovereign,
My nephew, who but lately is return'd
From foreign travel, kneels before thy feet,
And offers thee his earliest homage.
Grant him thy royal grace, and let him grow
And flourish in the sunshine of thy favour.

Mort. [*kneeling on one knee.*] Long live my royal
mistress! happiness,
And glory form a crown to grace her brows!

Eliz. Arise, Sir Knight; and welcome here in
England;
You've made. I hear, the tour, have been in France
And Rome, and tarried too some time at Rheims:
Tell me then, what our enemies are spinning.

Mort. May God confound them all! and may the
darts
Which they are aiming at my Sovereign,
Recoiling, strike their own perfidious breasts!

Eliz. Saw you Morgtn, and the wily Bishop
Of Ross?—

Mort. My Queen, I saw all Scottish exiles,
Who forge at Rheims their plots against this isle.
I stole into their confidence, in hopes
To learn what mischief they were brooding o'er.

Paul. Private dispatches they entrusted to him,
In cyphers, for the Queen of Scots, which he,
With loyal hand, hath given up to us.

Eliz. Say, what are then their latest plans of treason?

Mort. It struck them, as it were a thunderbolt,
That France should leave them, and with England
close
This firm alliance; now they turn their hopes
Tow'rds Spain——

Eliz. This, Walsingham hath written us.

Mort. Besides, a bull, which from the Vatican
Pope Sixtus lately levell'd at thy throne,
Arriv'd at Rheims, as I was leaving it:—
With the next ship, we may expect it here. .

Lei. England no more is frighten'd by such arms.

Bur. They're always dangerous in bigots' hands.

Eliz. [*looking stedfastly at Mortimer.*] Your enemies
have said, that you frequented
The schools at Rheims, and have abjur'd your faith.

Mort. 'Tis true, I seem'd to do so; I cannot
Deny it; thus far went my zeal to serve thee.

Eliz. [*to Paulet, who presents papers to her.*] What
have you there?

Paul. It is from Lady Stuart,
'Tis a petition, and to thee address'd.

Bur. [*hastily catching at it.*] Give me the letter.

Paul. [*giving it to the Queen.*] By your leave, my
Lord

High Treasurer; the lady order'd me
To bring it to her Majesty's own hands.
She says, I am her enemy; I am
Only the enemy of her offences,
And that which is consistent with my duty
I will, and readily, oblige her in.

[*The Queen takes the letter : as she reads it, Mortimer and Leicester speak some words in private.*]

Bur. [*to Paulet.*] What may the contents of the
letter be?

Idle complaints, from which one ought to screen
The Queen's too tender heart.

Paul. What it contains
 She did not hide from me; she begs a boon;
 She begs to be admitted to the grace
 Of speaking with the Queen.

Bur. It cannot be.

Tal. Why not? Her supplication's not unjust.

Bur. For her, the base encourager of murder;
 Her, who hath thirsted for our sov'reign's blood,
 The privilege to see the royal presence
 Is forfeited: a faithful counsellor
 Can never give this treacherous advice.

Tal. And if the Queen is gracious, Sir, are you
 The man to hinder pity's soft emotions?

Bur. She is condemn'd; her hated head now lies
 Beneath the axe, and it would ill become
 The Queen to see a death-devoted head.
 The sentence cannot have its execution
 If the Queen's Majesty approaches her,
 For pardon e'er attends the royal presence,
 As sickness flies the health-dispensing hand.

Eliz. [*having read the letter, dries her tears.*]

O! what is man! what is the boast of earth!
 To what extremities is she reduc'd
 Who with such proud and splendid hopes began!

Who, call'd to sit on the most ancient throne
 Of Christendom, misled by vain ambition,
 Hop'd with a triple Crown to deck her brows!
 How is her language alter'd, since the time
 When she assum'd the arms of England; when
 She from her flatterers enjoy'd the title
 Of Sov'reign of the two Britannic isles.
 Forgive me, Lords, my heart is cleft in twain,
 Anguish possesses me, and my soul bleeds
 To think that earthly goods are so unstable,
 And that the dreadful fate which rules mankind
 Should threaten mine own house, and scowl so near me.

Tal. O, Queen! the God of mercy hath inform'd
 Your heart; O! hearken to this heav'nly guidance.
 Most grievously, indeed, hath she aton'd
 Her grievous crime, and it is time that now,
 At last, her heavy penance have an end.
 Stretch forth your hand, tow'rds her who's fall'n so
 low,

And, like the luminous vision of an angel,
 Descend into her jail's sepulchral night.

Bur. Be stedfast, mighty Queen; let no emotion
 Of seeming laudable humanity

Mislead thee ; take not from thyself the pow'r
Of acting as necessity commands.

Thou *canst* not pardon her, thou *canst* not save her :
Then heap not on thyself the odious blame,
That thou, with cruel and contemptuous triumph,
Didst glut thyself with gazing on thy victim.—

Lei. Let us, my Lords, remain within our bounds ;
The Queen is wise, and doth not need our counsels,
To lead her to the most becoming choice ;
This meeting of the Queens hath nought in common
With the proceedings of the Court of Justice.
The law of England, not the monarch's will,
Condemns the Queen of Scotland, and 'twere worthy
Of the great soul of Queen Elizabeth,
To follow the soft dictates of her heart,
Though justice swerve not from its rigid path.

Eliz. Retire, my Lords.—We shall perhaps find
means

T'unite as fitting what compassion asks,
And what necessity imposes on us.
And now retire—

[*the Lords retire : she calls Sir Edward Mortimer back.*
Sir Edward Mortimer !

Elizabeth, Mortimer.

Eliz. [*Having measured him for some time, with her eyes, in silence.*] You've shewn a spirit of Advent'rous courage,

And, for your years, uncommon self-command :

Who practices so soon dissimulation's

Hard lessons, is a man before the time,

And shortens his probationary years.

Fate calls you to a lofty scene of action ;

I prophecy it, and can, happily

For you, fulfil, myself, my own prediction.

Mort. Illustrious mistress, what I am, and what I can perform, 's devoted to your service.

Eliz. You've made acquaintance with the foes of England.

Their hate to me is unappeasable ;

Their bloody machinations unexhausted.

As yet, indeed, Almighty Providence

Hath shielded me, but on my brows the crown

For ever trembles, while *she* lives who fans

Their bigot-zeal, and nourishes their hopes.

Mort. She lives no more, as soon as you command it.

Eliz. O Sir! I thought I saw my labour's end,
And I am come no farther than at first.
I wish'd to let the laws of England act,
And keep my own hands pure from blood's defilement.

The sentence is pronounc'd—what gain I by it?
It must be executed, Mortimer,
And I must authorize the execution.
The blame will ever light on me, I must
Own it, and cannot save appearances.
That is the worst—

Mort. But can appearances
Disturb your mind, in the good cause of justice?

Eliz. You are unpractis'd in the world, Sir Knight;
What we appear, is subject to the judgment
Of all mankind, and what we are, of no man.
No one will be convinc'd that I am right,
I must take care that my connivance in
Her death at least be wrapp'd in endless doubt.
In deeds of such uncertain double visage
Security is only found in darkness.

The worst step's that what one acknowledges,
And what is not abandon'd, is not lost.

Mort. [*seeking to learn his meaning.*] Then it were
perhaps the best—

Eliz. [*quick.*] Aye, surely were it.
The best ; O Sir, my better angel speaks
Through you ;—go on then, worthy Sir, conclude ;
You are in earnest, you examine deep,
Have quite a diff'rent spirit from your uncle's.

Mort. [*surprised.*] Did you discover to the Knight
your wish ?

Eliz. I am sorry that I did—

Mort. Excuse his age,
The old man is grown scrupulous ; such bold
Adventures ask the enterprizing courage
Of youth—

Eliz. And may I venture then on *you*—

Mort. My hand I'll lend thee ; save then as thou canst
Thy reputation—

Eliz. Yes, Sir ; if you could
But waken me some morning with this news :—
“ Maria Stuart, your blood-thirsty foe,
“ Breath'd yesternight her last”—

Mort. Depend on me.

Eliz. When shall my head lie down in peace to sleep ?

Mort. Thy fears be ended with the next new moon.

Eliz. And be the self-same happy day the dawn
Of your preferment—so God speed you, Sir ;
And be not hurt, if chance my thankfulness
Should wear the mask of darkness.—Silence is
The happy suitor's god—the closest bonds,
The dearest, are the work of secrecy. [Exit.]

Mortimer. [alone.]

Go, false deceitful Queen ! as thou deludest
The world, e'en so delude I thee ;—'tis right,
Thus to betray thee ; 'tis a worthy action.
Look I then like a murderer ? hast thou
Read on my brow such base dexterity ?
Trust only to *my* arm, and keep thine own
Back, and assume the pious outward side
Of mercy 'fore the world, the while thou reckon'st
In secret on my ~~man~~'rous aid ; and thus
We shall, by gaining time, ensure her rescue.

Thou wilt exalt me !—shew'st significant,
 From far a costly prize ; and even were
 Thyself the prize, and all thy woman's favour,
 What art thou, poor one, and what canst thou
 proffer ?

I scorn ambition's avaricious strife,
 With *her* alone's the charm of life ;
 O'er *her*, in rounds of endless glory, hover
 Spirits with grace, and youth eternal bless'd ;
 Celestial joy is throu'd upon her breast.
 Thou hast but earthly, mortal goods to offer—
 That sov'reign good, for which all else be slighted,
 When heart in heart, delighting and delighted ;
 Together flow in sweet forgetfulness ;—
 Ne'er did'st thou woman's fairest crown possess,
 Ne'er hast thou with thy hand an husband's hand
 requited.

—I must attend Lord Leicester, and deliver
 Her letter to him—'tis a hateful charge—
 I have no confidence in this court puppet—
I can effect her rescue, *I* alone ;
 Be danger, honour, and the prize my own.

[as he is going, Paulett meets him.

Mortimer, Paulett.

Paul. What said the Queen to you?—

Mort. 'Twas nothing, Sir ;

Nothing of consequence—

Paul. [*looking at him earnestly.*] Hear, Mortimer !
It is a false and slipp'ry ground on which
You tread—the grace of princets is alluring,
Youth is ambitious—let not your ambition
Betray you.—

Mort. Did not then yourself present me
At court?—

Paul. O, would to God I had not done it !
The honour of *our* house was never gather'd
In courts—stand fast my nephew—purchase not
Too dear, nor sully with a crime your conscience.

Mort. What are these fears ? What are you dream-
ing of?

Paul. How high soe'er the Queen may promise you
To raise you, trust not her alluring words.
The spirit of the world's a lying spirit,
And vice is a deceitful, treach'rous friend.

She will deny you, if you listen to her ;
 And, to preserve her own good name, will punish
 The bloody deed, which she herself commanded.

Mort. The bloody deed !—

Paul. Away, dissimulation !—

I know the deed, the Queen propos'd to you.
 She hopes that your ambitious youth will be
 More docile than my rigid age ; but say,
 Have you then pledg'd your promise, have you ?—

Mort. Uncle !

Paul. If you have done so, I abandon you,
 And lay my curse upon you.—

Lei. [*entering.*] Worthy Sir !

I with your nephew wish a word ;—the Queen
 Is graciously inclin'd towards him ; she
 Wills that the person of the Lady Stuart,
 Be unconditionally unto him
 Entrusted—she depends upon his honour.

Paul. Depends ?—'tis well—

Lei. What say you, Sir ?

Paul. The Queen

Depends on him ; and I, my Lord, depend
 Upon myself, and my two open eyes, [*Exit.*

Leicester, Mortimer.

Lei. [*surprised.*] What ail'd the Knight?

Mort. My Lord, I cannot tell,

What angers him:—the confidence, perhaps,
The Queen so suddenly confers upon me.

Lei. Are you deserving then of confidence?

Mort. This question would I put to you, Lord
Leicester.

Lei. You said you wish'd to speak with me in
private.

Mort. Assure me first, that I may venture it.

Lei. Who gives me an assurance on your side?
Let not my want of confidence offend you ;
I see you, Sir, exhibit at this court
Two diff'rent aspects ; one of them *must* be
A borrow'd one ; but which of them is real ?

Mort. These self-same doubts I have concerning
you.

Lei. Which then, shall pave the way to confidence?

Mort. He who, by doing it, is least in danger.

Lei. Well, that are you—

Mort. No, you;—the evidence
Of such a weighty, powerful peer as you
Can overwhelm my voice—my accusation
Is feeble 'gainst your rank, and 'gainst your favour.

Lei. Sir, you mistake ; in ev'ry thing but this
I'm pow'rful here ; but in this tender point,
Which I am call'd upon to trust you with,
I am the weakest man of all the court,
And a poor testimony can undo me.

Mort. If the all-pow'rful Earl of Leicester deigns
To stoop so low to meet me, and to make
Such a confession to me, I may venture
To think a little better of myself,
And go in magnanimity before him.

Lei. Lead you the way of confidence, I'll follow.

Mort. [*producing suddenly the letter.*] Here is a
Letter from the Queen of Scotland.

Lei. [*alarm'd, catches hastily at the letter.*] Speak
softly, Sir !—what see I ?—Oh, it is
Her picture !—

[*kisses and examines it with speechless joy.—a pause.—*]

Mort. [*who has not lost sight of him the whole time.*]

Now, my Lord, I can believe you.

Lei. [*having hastily run through the letter.*] You know the contents of the letter, Sir?

Mort. Not I.—

Lei. Indeed! She surely hath inform'd you—

Mort. Nothing hath she inform'd me of:—She said
You would explain this riddle to me—'tis
To me a riddle, that the Earl of Leicester,
The far-fam'd fav'rite of Elizabeth,
The open, bitter enemy of Máry,
And one of those who spoke her mortal sentence,
Should be the man, from whom the Queen, in thral-
dom,

Expects deliv'rance—yet it must be so ;
Your eyes express too plainly, what your heart
Feels for the hapless lady.—

Lei. Tell me, Sir ;

First, how it comes that you should take so warm
An int'rest in her fate ; and what it was
Gain'd you her confidence?—

Mort. My Lord, I can,
And in few words, explain this mystery.
I lately have at Rome abjur'd my errors,
And stand in correspondence with the Guises.

A letter from the Cardinal Archbishop
Was my credential with the Queen of Scots.

Lei. I am acquainted, Sir, with your conversion;
'Twas that which wak'd my confidence towards you.
Each remnant of distrust be henceforth banish'd;
Your hand, Sir, and forgive me what is pass'd.—
I cannot use enough precaution here.
Burleigh and Walsingham, I know it, hate me,
And, watching me, in secret spread their nets:
You might have been their instrument, their creature,
To lure me to their toils.—

Mort. What little steps
So great a nobleman is forc'd to take
At court!—my Lord, I pity you.—

Lei. With joy
I rest upon the faithful breast of friendship;
Where I can ease me of this long constraint.
You seem surpris'd, Sir, that my heart is turn'd
So suddenly towards the captive Queen.
In truth, I never hated her;—the time's
Necessity made me her adversary;—
She was intended for me long ago,
You know it, ere she gave her hand to Darnley,

While yet the beams of glory smil'd around her.
Then did I coldly push this blessing from me;—
Now in confinement, at the gates of death,
 I claim her, at the hazard of my life.

Mort. That looks magnanimous, my Lord—

Lei. The state
 Of circumstances, since that time, is chang'd.
 'Twas my ambition blunted all my feelings
 'Gainst youth and beauty.—Mary's hand I held
 Too insignificant for me;—I hoped
 To be the husband of the Queen of England.

Mort. It is notorious, that she preferr'd you
 Before all others.

Lei. So it seem'd, Sir ; yet
 Now, after ten lost years of tedious courtship,
 And hateful self-constraint—O, Sir, my heart
 Must ease itself of this long agony.—
 They call me happy!—did they only know
 What the chains are, for which they envy me !
 When I had sacrificed ten bitter years
 To the proud idol of her vanity ;
 Submitted with a slave's humility
 To ev'ry change of her despotic fancies ;

The plaything of her little, humoursome,
 Capricious wilfulness ; now by her love
 Caress'd, and now, with prudish pride, rejected ;
 Alike tormented by her grace and rigour :
 Watch'd like a pris'ner by the Argus-eyes
 Of jealousy ; examin'd like a school-boy,
 And rail'd at like a servant.—O, no tongue
 Can paint this hell !—

Mort. My Lord, I feel for you.—

Lei. To lose, and at the very goal, the prize!—
 Another comes to rob me of the fruits
 Of my so anxious wooing.—I must lose
 To her young blooming husband all those rights
 Of which I was so long in full possession ;
 And I must from the stage descend, where I
 So long have play'd the most distinguish'd part.
 Not of her hand alone, this envious stranger
 Threatens to rob me of her favour too ;
 She is a woman, and he's form'd to please.

Mort. He is the son of Cath'rine—he has learnt,
 In a good school, the arts of flattery.

Lei. Thus fall my hopes ;—I strove to seize a
 plank

To bear me in this shipwreck of my fortunes,
 And my eye turn'd itself tow'ards the fair hope
 Of former days once more; then Mary's image
 Within me was renew'd, and youth and beauty
 Once more asserted all their former rights.

No more 'twas cold ambition; 'twas my heart
 Which now compar'd, and with regret I felt
 The value of the jewel I had lost.

With horror I beheld her in the depths
 Of misery, cast down by my transgression;
 Then wak'd the hope in me, that I might still
 Deliver and possess her; I contriv'd
 To send her, through a faithful hand, the news
 Of my conversion to her interests;
 And in this letter which you brought me, she
 Assures me that she pardons me, and offers
 Herself as guerdon, if I rescue her.—

Mort. But you attempted nothing for her rescue.
 You suffer'd patiently her condemnation;
 You gave, yourself, your verdict for her death;
 A miracle must happen, and the light
 Of truth must move me, *me*, her keeper's nephew,
 And Heav'n must, in the Vatican at Rome,

Prepare for her an unexpected succour,
Else had she never found the way to you.'

Lei. O, Sir! it has tormented me enough!
About this time it was, that they remov'd her
From Talbot's castle, and deliver'd her
Up to your uncle's stricter custody.
Each way to her was shut.—I was oblig'd,
Before the world, to persecute her still;
But do not think that I would patiently
Have seen her led to death.—No, Sir; I hop'd,
And I hope still, to ward off all extremes,
Till I can find some certain mean to save her.

Mort. That is already found: my Lord of Leicester,
Your gen'rous confidence in me, deserves
A like return.—I will deliver her—
That is my object here—my dispositions
Are made already, and your pow'ful aid,
Assures us of success in our attempt.

Lei. What say you?—you alarm me—how?—
you would—

Mort. I'll open forcibly her prison-gates:—
I have confederates, and all is ready.—

Lei. You have confederates, accomplices?

Alas ! in what rash enterprizes would you
Engage me ? and these friends, know they *my* secret ?

Mort. Fear not ; our plan was laid without your
help,

Without your help it would have been accomplish'd,
Had she not signified her resolution
To owe to you alone her liberty.

Lei. And can you then, with certainty, assure me,
That in your plot my name has not been mention'd.

Mort. You may depend upon it—how, my Lord,
So scrupulous when help is offer'd you?
You wish to rescue Mary, and possess her ;
You find confed'rates ; sudden, unexpected
The readiest means fall, as if it were from Heav'n,
Yet you shew more perplexity than joy.

Lei. We must avoid all violence ; it is
Too dangerous an enterprize.—

Mort. Delay
Is also dangerous—

Lei I tell you, Sir,
'Tis not to be attempted—

Mort. 'Tis, my Lord,
Too hazardous for *you* who would possess her ;

But *we*, who only wish to rescue her,
We are more bold.

Lei. Young man, you are too hasty
 In such a thorny, dangerous attempt.

Mort. And you too scrupulous in honour's cause.

Lei. I see the trammels that are spread around us.

Mort. And I feel courage to break through them all.

Lei. Fool-hardiness and madness, is this courage.

Mort. This prudence is not bravery, my Lord.

Lei. You surely wish to end like Babington.

Mort. You not to imitate great Norfolk's virtue.

Lei. Norfolk did never win the bride he woo'd.

Mort. But yet he prov'd himself deserving of it.

Lei. If *we* are ruin'd, she must fall with us.

Mort. If *we* risk nothing, she will ne'er be rescued.

Lei. You will not weigh the matter, hear not; will
 With blind and hasty violence destroy,
 What was already in so fair a way.

Mort. Yes, sure, the way is fair, which you have
 made !—

What have *you* done then to deliver her ?

And how, if I were miscreant enough

To murder her, as was propos'd to me

This moment by Elizabeth, and which
 She looks upon as certain, only name
 The measures *you* have taken to protect her?

Lei. Did the Queen give you then this bloody
 order?

Mort. She was deceiv'd in me, as Mary is
 In you.—

Lei. And have you promis'd it ; say, have you?

Mort. That she might not engage another's hand,
 I offer'd mine.—

Lei. Well done, Sir,—that was right ;—
 This perhaps may give us room, for she relies
 Upon your bloody service, and the sentence
 Is unfulfill'd the while, and we gain time.

Mort. [*angry.*] No we are losing time.—

Lei. The Queen depends
 On you, and will the readier make a shew
 Of mercy—perhaps I may prevail on her
 To give an audience to her adversary ;
 This step, consents she to it, ties her hands :
 Yes ! I will try it, will strain ev'ry nerve.—

Mort. And what is gain'd by this ? when she
 discovers

That I am cheating her, that Mary lives ;
 Are we not where we were ? She never will
 Be free ; the mildest lot which can await her
 At best, is but perpetual confinement.
 A daring deed must end the matter ; why
 Will you not rather then begin with one ?
 The pow'r is in your hands, would you but rouse
 The might of your dependants round about
 Your many castles, 'twere an host ; and still
 Has Mary many secret friends : the Howards'
 And Percies' noble houses, though their chiefs
 Be fall'n, are rich in heroes ; they but wait.
 For the example of some potent lord.—
 Away with feigning—act an open part,
 And, like a loyal knight, protect your fair one ;
 Fight a good fight for her ;—you know you are
 Lord of the person of the Queen of England,
 Whene'er you will :—invite her to your castle,
 Oft hath she thither follow'd you—then shew
 That you're a man—then speak as master—keep her
 Confin'd till she release the Queen of Scots.

Lci. I am astonish'd—I am terrified !—

Where would your giddy madness hurry you!

Are you acquainted with this country?—know you
 The deeps and shallows of this court? with what
 A potent spell this female sceptre binds
 And rules the vanquish'd spirits? 'tis in vain
 You seek th' heroic energy which once
 Was active in this land?—it is subdued,
 A woman holds it under lock and key,
 And ev'ry spring of courage is relax'd.
 Follow my counsel—venture nothing rashly,
 Some one approaches—go—

Mort. And Mary hopes—
 Shall I with empty hopes return to her?

Lei. Bring her my vows of everlasting love.—

Mort. Bring them yourself: I offer'd my assistance
 As her deliv'rer, not your messenger. [Exit.

Elizabeth, Leicester.

Eliz. Say who was here? I heard the sound of
 voices.

Lei. [turning quickly and perplexed round, on hearing
 the Queen] It was young Mortimer—

Eliz. How now, my Lord:
Why so confus'd?

Lei. [*collecting himself.*] Your presence is the cause.
I never saw you yet so full of charms!
Here stand I blinded by your beauty's splendour.
Oh !—

Eliz. Whence this sigh?

Lei. Have I no reason then
To sigh ?—when I behold you in your glory,
I feel anew, with pain unspeakable,
The loss which threatens me.—

Eliz. What loss, my lord?

Lei. Your heart—'tis your inestimable self :—
Soon will you feel yourself within the arms
Of your young ardent husband, highly bless'd :
He will possess your heart, without a rival.
He is of royal blood—that am not *I*.—
Yet, spite of all the world can say, there lives not
One on this globe, who with such fervent zeal
Adores you, as the man who loses you.
Anjou hath never seen you, can but love
Your glory, and the splendour of your reign ;—
But I love *you*—and were you born of all

The peasant maids the poorest, I the first
Of kings, I would descend to your condition,
And lay my crown and sceptre at your feet !

Eliz. O, pity me, my Dudley ; do not blame
me—

I cannot ask my heart—oh, that had chos'n
Far otherwise ; and how I envy others
Who can exalt the object of their love !
But I am not so happy ! I cannot
Place on the brows of him, who of all men
Is dearest to me, the imperial crown.
The Queen of Scotland was allow'd to make
Her hand the token of her inclination ;—
She hath had ev'ry freedom, and hath drank,
And to the very dregs, the cup of joy.

Lei. And now she drinks the bitter cup of sorrow.

Eliz. She never did respect the world's opinion ;—
Life was to her a sport ;—she never courted
The yoke to which I willing bow'd my neck.
And yet, methinks, I had as just a claim
As she, to please myself, and taste the joys
Of life :—but I preferr'd the rigid duties
Which royalty imposed on me ;—yet *she*,

She was the favourite of all the men,
 Because she only strove to be a woman;
 And youth and age became alike her suitors.
 Thus are the men—voluptuaries all !
 The willing slaves of levity and pleasure;
 Value that least which claims their reverence.
 And did not even Talbot, though grey-headed,
 Grow young again, when speaking of her charms ?

Lei. Forgive him—he was once her keeper, she
 With cunning flattery hath blear'd his eyes.

Eliz. And is it really true, that she's so fair?
 So often have I been oblig'd to hear
 The praises of this wonder—it were well
 If I could learn on what I might depend :
 Pictures are flattering, and description lies ;—
 I will trust nothing, but my own conviction.
 Why gaze you at me thus ?—

Lei. I plac'd in thought
 You and Maria Stuart, side by side.
 Yes ! I could wish, I own, to have the pleasure,
 If it could be but secretly contriv'd,
 To see you opposite the Scottish Queen.
 Then would you feel, and not till then, the full

Enjoyment of of your triumph :—she deserves
 To be thus humbled ; she deserves to see,
 With her own eyes, and envy is sharp-sighted,
 How much she is inferior to her
 In majesty of beauty, who excels her
 In ev'ry other virtue.

Eliz. She's the younger
 In years.—

Lei Indeed ? I should have never thought it ;
 Her sufferings, indeed ! 'tis possible
 They may have made her old before her time.—
 Yes, and 'twould mortify her more to see thee
 As bride—*she* hath already turn'd her back
 On each fair hope of life, and she would see thee
 Advancing tow' rds the open arms of joy—
 See thee as bride of France's royal son.—
 She who hath always made her marriage union
 With France her pride, and greatest boast, and still
 Depends upon it's powerful assistance.

Eliz. [*with a careless air.*] You know I'm teaz'd to
 see her.

Lei. She requests it
 As an indulgence, grant it her as penance ;—

For though you should conduct her to the block,
 Yet would it less torment her, than to see
 Herself extinguish'd by your beauty's splendour.
 Thus can you murder her, as she hath wish'd
 To murder you—when she beholds your beauty
 Guarded by modesty, and beaming with
 The glory of unblemish'd reputation ;
 (Which *she* with thoughtless levity discarded)
 Exalted by the splendour of the crown,
 And blooming now with tender bridal graces—
 Then is the hour of her destruction come.
 Yes—when I now behold you—you were never,
 No never were you so prepar'd to seal
 The triumph of your beauty. . As but now
 You enter'd the apartment, I was dazzled
 As by a glorious vision from on high.
 Could you but now, now as you are, appear
 Before her, you could find no better moment.

Eliz. Now?—no—not now—no Leicester—this
 must be

Maturely weigh'd—I must with Burleigh—

Lei. Burleigh !

To him you are but Sov'reign, and as such

Alone he seeks your welfare ; but your rights
 Deriv'd from womanhood, this tender point,
 Must be decided by your own tribunal,
 Not by the statesman :—yet e'en policy
 Demands that you should see her, and allure,
 By such a gen'rous deed, the public voice.—
 You can hereafter act as it may please you,
 To rid you of the hateful enemy.

Eliz. But would it then become me to behold
 My kinswoman in infamy, and want ?
 They say she is not royally attended ;
 Would not the sight of her distress reproach me ?

Lei. You need not cross her threshold—hear my
 counsel :—

A fortunate conjuncture favours it—
 The hunt you mean to honour with your presence
 Is in the neighbourhood of Fotheringay ;
 Permission may be giv'n to Lady Stuart,
 To take the air ; you meet her in the park,
 As if by accident ; it must not seem
 To have been plann'd, and should you be against it,
 You need not speak.—

Eliz. If I commit a folly,

Be your's the fault, not mine.—I would not care
 To-day to cross your wishes, for to-day
 I've griev'd you more than all my other subjects.

[*tenderly.*

Let it then be your fancy, Leicester, hence
 You see the free obsequiousness of love,
 Which suffers that which it cannot approve.

[*Leicester prostrates himself before her, and the Curtain falls.*

ACT III.

Scene.—IN A PARK.—IN THE FORE-GROUND TREES; IN
THE BACK-GROUND A DISTANT PROSPECT.

*Mary advances, running from behind the trees ; Hannah
Kennedy follows slowly.*

KENNEDY.

You hasten forwards just as had you wings—
I cannot follow you so swiftly—wait.

Mary. Freedom returns ! O let me enjoy it,—
Let me be childish,—be childish with me !
Freedom invites me ! O let me employ it,
Skimming with winged step light over the lea ;—
Have I escaped from this mansion of mourning,
Holds me no more the sad dungeon of care ?
Let me, with thirsty impatience burning,
Drink in the free, the celestial air !

Ken. O, my dear lady ! but a very little
Is your sad jail extended ; you behold not

The wall that shuts us in, these plaited tufts
Of trees hide from your sight the hated object.

Mary. Thanks to these friendly trees, that hide
from me

My prison walls, and flatter my illusion !

Happy I'll dream myself, and free ;

Why wake me from my dream's so sweet confusion ?

Th' extended vault of heav'n around me lies,

Free and unfetter'd range my eyes

O'er space's vast immeasurable sea !

From where yon misty mountains rise on high,

I can my empire's boundaries explore ;

And those light clouds which, steering southwards, fly,

Seek the mild clime of France's genial shore.

Hastening clouds ! ye meteors that fly ;

Could I but with you sail through the sky !

Tenderly greet me the land of my youth !

I am a pris'ner ! I'm in restraint,

I have none else to bear my complaint,

Free in æther your path is seen,

Ye are not subject to this tyrant Queen.

Ken. Alas ! dear Lady ! You're beside yourself,
This long-lost, long-sought freedom makes you rave.

Mary. Yonder's a fisher returning home ;—
 Poor though it be, would he lend me his wherry,
 Quick to congenial shores wou'd I ferry.
 Spare is his trade, and labour's his doom—
 Rich would I freight his vessel with treasure,
 Such a draught shou'd he find as he never had seen,
 Wealth should he find in his nets without measure,
 Would he but rescue a captive Queen.

Ken, Fond, fruitless wishes ! ' See you not from far,
 How we are follow'd by observing spies ?—
 A dismal, barb'rous prohibition, scares
 Each sympathetic being from our ways.

Mary. No, gentle Hannah ! think not that in vain
 My prison gates are open'd ; this small favour
 Announces me a greater happiness.—
 No ! I mistake not—'tis the active hand
 Of love to which I owe this kind indulgence.—
 I recognize therein, the mighty arm
 Of Leicester :—they will widen, by degrees,
 My prison ; will accustom me through small,
 To greater liberty, until at last
 I shall behold the face of him whose hand
 Will loosen soon my fetters, and for ever.

Ken. O, my dear Queen ! I cannot reconcile
 These contradictions. 'Twas but very lately
 That they announc'd your death, and suddenly
 To-day you have such liberty—to those
 I have been told the chains are also loos'd,
 Whom everlasting liberty awaits.

[hunting horns at a distance.]

Mary. Hears't thou the bugle ? blithly resounding,
 Hear'st thou its blast through wood and plain ?
 Could I once more on my nimble steed bounding,
 Join the jocund, the frolicksome train !

[hunting horns again heard.]

Again ! O sadly pleasing remembrance !
 These are the sounds which so sprightly and clear,
 Oft, when with music the hounds and the horn,
 Cheerfully waken'd the slumbering morn,
 On the heaths of the Highlands delighted my ear.

To them, Paulett.

Paul. Well ! have I done at last then right, my lady ;
 Do I deserve this once, at least, your thanks ?

Mary. How say you, Sir; is't you who have
procur'd me
This favour? you?

Paul. Why should it not be I?
I was at the court, and gave the Queen your letter.—

Mary. You gave it her? In sooth, Sir, did you so?
And is this freedom which I now enjoy,
My letter's consequence?

Paul. [*significantly.*] Nor that alone;
Prepare yourself to see a greater still.

Mary. A greater still! what shou'd that mean, Sir
Knight?

Paul. You heard the bugle-horn?

Mary. [*starting back with foreboding apprehension.*]
You frighten me—

Paul. The Queen is hunting in the neighbour-
hood—

Mary. What!

Paul. In not many moments she's before you.—

Ken. [*hastening towards Mary, and about to fall.*]
How fare you, gracious lady?—you grow pale.

Paul. How? is't not right? was it not then your
pray'r?

'Tis granted now, before it was expected ;
 You ever were before so nimble-tongued ;
 Now you may use your talent ; now's the moment
 To speak.

Mary. O, why was I not told of this ?
 Now I am not prepar'd for it—now not—
 What, as the greatest favour, I besought
 Appears now frightful, terrible :—come, Hannah,
 Lead me towards the house, that I collect
 My spirits.

Paul. Stay ;—you must await her here.
 Yes !—I believe you may be well alarm'd
 To stand before your judge.—

To them, the Earl of Shrewsbury.

Mary. 'Tis not for that,
 O God ! I've other thoughts, and other feelings.
 O, worthy Shrewsbury !—You come as 'twere
 An angel sent from heav'n : O, help me ! help me.
 I cannot, will not see her. Save me, save me
 From the detested sight !—

Shrews. Collect yourself,

My Queen, and summon up your courage ; this
Is the decisive moment.—

Mary. I have waited,
For years have I prepar'd myself to meet it;
All have I studied, well have weigh'd, and written
Each word within the tablets of my mem'ry,
How I might touch, and move her to compassion.
Forgotten suddenly, effac'd is all,
And nothing lives within me at this moment,
But the fierce, burning feeling of my suff'rings.
My heart is turn'd to bloody hate against her ;
All gentle thoughts, all words of soft persuasion,
Are gone, and round me stand with grisly mien,
The fiends of hell, and shake their snaky locks !

Shrews. Command your wild, rebellious blood ;—
constrain

The bitterness which fills your heart ;—it brings
No good when hatred is oppos'd to hatred.
How much soe'er your inmost soul resist,
Yield to the times, obey the moment's laws ;
She is the mighty one, be you then humble.

Mary. 'Fore her ? I never, never can.

Shrews. Yet be so ;—

Speak with respect, with calmness; strive to move
 Her magnanimity; insist not, now,
 Upon your rights, not now,—'tis not the season.

Mary. Ah! woe is me! I've pray'd for my destruction,

And, as a curse to me, my pray'r is heard.
 We never shou'd have seen each other—never!—
 O, this can never, never come to good.
 Rather in love cou'd fire and water meet,
 The timid lamb embrace the roaring tiger!—
 I have been hurt too grievously; she hath
 Too grievously oppress'd me;—no atonement
 Can make us friends!—

Shrews. First see her, face to face:—
 Did I not see how she was mov'd at reading
 Your letter? how her eyes were drown'd in tears?
 No,—she is not unfeeling;—only place
 More confidence in her.—It was for this
 That I came on before her, to entreat you
 To be collected,—to admonish you—

Mary. Is Burleigh with her too, my evil genius?

Shrews. No one attends her but the Earl of Leicester,—

Mary. Lord Leicester?—

Shrews. Fear not him ; it is not he
Who wishes your destruction ;—’twas his work,
That here the Queen hath granted you this meeting.

Mary. Ah ! well I knew it.

Shrews. What ?

Paul. The Queen approaches.

*[they all draw aside ; Mary alone remains, leaning
on Kennedy.]*

To them, Elizabeth, Earl of Leicester, and Retinue.

Eliz. *[to Leicester.]* What seat’s that, Leicester ?

Lei. Fotheringay Castle.

Eliz. *[to Shrewsbury.]* My Lord, send our retinue
back to London ;

The people crowd too eager in the roads,

We seek a refuge in this silent park.

*[Talbot sends the train away. She looks steadfastly
at Mary, as she speaks further with Paulett.]*

My honest people love me overmuch,

Idolatrous are these loud signs of joy ;

Thus should a God be honour’d, not a mortal.

Mary. [*who the whole time had lean'd, almost fainting, on Kennedy, rises now, and her eyes meet the steady piercing look of Elizabeth; she shudders and throws herself again upon Kennedy's bosom.*]

O God! from out these features speaks no heart.——

Eliz. What lady's that?—

[*a general, embarrassed silence.*]

Lei. You are at Fotheringay,
My Queen?—

Eliz. [*as if surprised, casting an angry look at Leicester.*] Who hath done this? my Lord of Leicester.

Lei. Tis past, my Queen;—and now that heav'n hath led

Your footsteps hither, be magnanimous;

Let mercy, royal mercy, be triumphant.

Shrews. O royal mistress! yield to our entreaties;
O look upon this poor unhappy one,
Who here dissolves before you.

[*Mary collects herself, and begins to advance towards Elizabeth, stops shuddering at half-way:—her action expresses the most violent contest with herself.*]

Eliz. How, my lords !

Which of you then announc'd to me a pris'ner
Bow'd down by woe ? I see a haughty one,
By no means humbled by calamity.

Mary. So be it ;—I will also stoop to this.—
Farewell weak heavings, of the gen'rous soul !
I will forget then what I am, and what
I've suffer'd ; I will fall before *her* feet
Who hurl'd me down to this indignity.

[*she turns towards the Queen.*

The voice of heav'n decides for you, my sister,
I see your happy brows are crown'd with triumph,
The Godhead I adore, which thus hath rais'd you.

[*she kneels.*

But in your turn be you too gen'rous, sister ;
Let me not lie disgracefully before you ;
Stretch forth your hand, your royal hand, to raise
Your sister from a fall so very deep.

Eliz. [*stepping back.*] You are where it becomes you,

Lady Stuart ;

And thankfully I prize my God's protection,
Who hath not suffer'd me to kneel a suppliant
Thus ~~at~~ your feet, as you now kneel at mine.

Mary. [*with encreasing energy of feeling.*] Think on
all earthly things; vicissitudes.

Oh! there are gods who punish haughty pride :
Respect them, honour them, the dreadful ones
Who thus before thy feet have humbled me !
Before these strangers, who behold us, honour
Yourself in me : profane not, O, defile not
The blood of the great Tudors, which pervades
My veins, as well as yours.—O God in Heav'n !
Stand not there rough, and inaccessible,
Like the steep cliff, which, lab'ring to embrace,
Struggles in vain the shipwreck'd mariner ;
My all, my life, my fortune all depends
Upon the influence of my words, my tears ;
That I may move your heart, O ! lighten mine.
If you regard me with that look of ice,
My shudd'ring heart contracts itself, the stream
Of tears is dried, and frigid horror chains
The words of supplication in my bosom !

Eliz. [*cold and severe.*] What would you say to me,
my Lady Stuart ?

You wish'd to speak with me ; and I, forgetting
The Queen, although so heavily offended,

Fulfil the pious duty of the sister,
 And grant you here the comfort of my presence.
 Yet I, in yielding to the gen'rous feelings
 Of magnanimity, expose myself
 To rightful censure, that I stoop so low,
 For well you know, you would have had me murder'd.
Mary. O! how shall I begin; how shall I then
 So artfully arrange my cautious words,
 That they may touch, yet not offend, your heart :—
 Strengthen my words, O God! and take from them
 What'er might wound :—alas! I cannot speak
 In my own cause's favour, but I must
 Accuse you heavily, and that I would not ;—
 You have not, as you ought, behav'd to me ;
 For I'm a Queen, like you, yet *you* have held me
 Confin'd in prison ; as a suppliant
 I came to you, yet *you* in me insulted
 The pious use of hospitality ;
 Despising too the holy law of nations,
 Immur'd me in a jail, and tore from me
 My friends and servants ; then was I expos'd
 To unbecoming want, and subjected
 To a disgraceful, insolent tribunal.—

No more of this ;—in everlasting silence
 Be buried all the cruelties I suffer'd.
 See,—I will throw the blame of all on fate,
 'Twas not your fault, it was not *my* fault neither
 An evil spirit rose from the abyss,
 To nourish in our hearts the flames of hate,
 By which our tender youth had been divided.
 It grew with us, and bad designing men
 Fann'd with their ready breath the fatal fire :
 Frantics, enthusiasts, with sword and dagger
 Arm'd the uncall'd-for hand ! that is the curse
 Of kings, that they, divided, tear the world
 In pieces with their hatred, and let loose
 The raging furies of each hellish discord !
 Now is no foreign tongue between us, sister,

[approaching her confidently, and with a flattering tone.]

We stand now face to face ; now, sister, speak ;
 Name but my crime, I'll fully satisfy you.—
 Alas ! had you but then vouchsaf'd to hear me
 As I so earnest sought to meet your eye,
 It never would have come to this, nor would,
 Here in this mournful place, have happen'd now
 This so distressful, this so mournful meeting.

Eliz. My better stars preserv'd me. I was warn'd,
 And laid not to my breast the pois'nous adder !—
 Accuse not fate ; your own deceitful heart
 It was, the wild ambition of your house :—
 As yet no enmities had pass'd between us,
 When your imperious uncle, the proud priest,
 Whose shameless hand grasps at all crowns, attack'd me
 With unprovok'd hostility, and taught
 You, but too docile, to assume my arms,
 To vest yourself with my imperial title,
 And meet me in the lists in mortal strife :
 What arms employ'd he not to storm my throne ?
 The curses of the priests, the people's sword,
 The dreadful weapons of religious frenzy ;—
 Here in my kingdom's peaceful citadel,
 He fann'd the flames of civil insurrection ;—
 But God is with me, and the haughty priest
 Has not maintain'd the field : the blow was aim'd
 Full at my head, but yours it is which falls !

Mary. I am in Heaven's hand : you will not, sure,
 Exert so bloodily the pow'r it gives you.

Eliz. Who shall prevent me ? Say, did not your
 uncle

Set all the kings of Europe the example,
 How to conclude a peace with those they hate.
 Be mine the school of Saint Bartholomew;
 What's kindred then to me, or law of nations?
 The church can break the bands of ev'ry duty;
 It consecrates the regicide, the traitor;
 I only practise what your priests have taught:
 Say then, what surety can be offer'd me
 Should I magnanimously loose your bonds?
 Say, with what lock can I secure your faith,
 Which by St. Peter's keys cannot be open'd?
 Force is my only surty; no alliance
 Can be concluded with a race of vipers.

Mary. O! this is but your dismal, dark suspicion!
 For you have constantly regarded me
 But as a stranger, and an enemy.
 Had you declar'd me heir to your dominions,
 As is my right, then gratitude and love
 Had fix'd, for you, in me a faithful friend
 And kinswoman.

Eliz. Your friendship is abroad,
 Your house is Papacy, the monk's your brother.
 Name *you* my successor! the treach'rous snare!

That in my life you might seduce my people;
 That, like a sly Armida, you might catch
 The kingdom's gen'rous youth in your lewdness;
 That all might turn to the new rising sun,
 And I—

Mary. O sister, rule your realm in peace;
 I give up ev'ry claim to these domains—
 Alas! the pinions of my soul are lam'd;
 Greatness entices me no more: your point
 Is gain'd; I am reduc'd to Mary's shadow—
 My noble spirit is at last broke down
 In base captivity :—you've done your worst
 On me; you have destroy'd me in my bloom :—
 Now, end your work, my sister ;—speak at length
 The word, which to pronounce has brought you
 hither ;

For I will ne'er believe you hither came
 To mock unfeelingly your hapless victim.—
 Pronounce this word ;—say, Mary, you are free :
 You have already felt my pow'r, learn now
 To honour too my generosity ;—
 Say so, and I will take my life, will take
 My freedom, as a present from your hands.

One word makes all undone ;—I wait for it ;—
 O let me, let me not too long await it.—
 Woe to you, end you not with this one word ?—
 For should you now not health-imparting, noble,
 Like a divinity, go from me, sister,—
 Not for this whole rich island, not for all
 The countries which the ocean encloses,
 Would I before you stand, as you 'fore me !

Eliz. Confess you then at length, that you are
 conquer'd :

Are all your schemes exhausted ! Is no murd'rer
 More on the road ? will no adventurer
 Attempt again, for you, the sad achievement ?
 Yes, madam, it is over :—You'll seduce
 No more : the world at length has other cares ;—
 None is ambitious of the dang'rous honour
 Of being your fourth husband :—You destroy
 Your wooers like your husbands.

Mary. [*starting angrily.*] Sister, sister !—
 O God ! God ! give me, give me moderation !

Eliz. [*regards her long, with a look of proud contempt.*]
 Those then, my Lord of Leicester, are the charms
 Which with impunity no man can view,

Near which no woman dare attempt to stand ?
 In sooth, this honour might be cheaply gain'd ;
 She who to all is common, may with ease
 Become the common object of applause.

Mary. That is too much !—

Eliz. [*laughing insultingly.*] You shew us now,
 indeed,

Your real face ; till now 'twas but the mask.

Mary. [*burning with rage, yet dignified and noble.*]

My sins were human, and the fruits of youth ;

Superior force seduced me. I have never

Denied it, have not hid it :—I despis'd,

With royal openness, all false appearance.

The worst of me is known, and I can say,

That I am better than my reputation.

Woe to you ! when, in time to come, the world

Shall draw the robe of honour from your deeds,

With which, a mistress in hypocrisy,

You've hid the lawless flames of stolen lust.—

Virtue was not your portion from your mother ;

Well know we what it was which brought the
 head

Of Anna Boleyn to the bloody block.

Shrews. [*stepping between both Queens.*] O! God
in heav'n! must it come to this!

Is this the moderation, the submission,
My Lady?—

Mary. Moderation! I've supported
What human nature can support: farewell,
Lamb-hearted resignation, passive patience
Fly to thy native heaven; burst at length
Thy bonds, come forward from thy dreary cave,
In all thy fury, long-suppressed rancour!—
And thou, who to the anger'd basilisk
Impart'st the murd'rous glance, O! arm my tongue
With poison'd darts!

Shrews. O, she's beside herself!
Forgive the mad exasperated woman.

[*Elizabeth, speechless for anger, casts enraged looks at*
Mary.

Lei. [*in the most violent agitation; he seeks to lead*
Elizabeth away.] Attend not to her rage:—away,
—away,

From this disastrous place!—

Mary. [*raising her voice.*] A bastard soils,
Profanes the English throne! the gen'rous Britons

Are cheated by a juggler, whose whole figure
Is false and painted, heart as well as face !—
If right prevail'd, you now would in the dust
Before me lie, for I'm your rightful monarch !—

*[Elizabeth hastily quits the Stage ; the Lords follow
her in the greatest consternation.]*

Mary, Kennedy.

Ken. What have you done? she goes in rage ;—
now all

Is o'er; all hope is lost.

Mary. *[still quite beside herself.]* She goes in rage !
She bears the worm of death within her heart !—

[falling on Kennedy's bosom.]

Now I'm at length at ease, at last, at last,
After whole years of sorrow and abasement,
One moment of victorious revenge ;
A weight falls off my heart, a weight of mountains ;—
I plung'd the steel in my oppressor's breast !

Ken. Unhappy lady !—Frenzy overcomes you.
Yes, you have wounded your inveterate foe ;

'Tis she who wields the light'ning, she is Queen,
You have insulted her before her minion.

Mary. I have abas'd her before Leicester's eyes;
He saw it, he was witness of my triumph.—
How did I hurl her from her haughty height,
He saw it, and his presence strengthen'd me.

To them, Mortimer.

Ken. O Sir! what an event!—

Mort. I heard it all—

*[gives the nurse a sign to repair to her post, and
draws nearer; his whole appearance expresses the
utmost violence of passion.]*

—Thine is the palm;—thou trodd'st her to the dust!—

Thou wast the queen, she was the malefactor;—

I am transported with thy noble courage;—

Yes!—I adore thee; like a goddess great

And glorious beam'st thou on me at this moment.

Mary. *[with vivacity and expectation.]* You spoke
with Leicester, brought my letter to him,
My present too?—O speak, Sir.

Mort. [*beholding her with glowing greedy looks.*] How
thy noble,

Thy royal indignation shone, and cast
A glory round thy beauty; yes, by heav'ns,
Thou art the fairest woman upon earth!

Mary. Sir, satisfy, I beg you, my impatience;
What says his lordship? say, Sir, may I hope?

Mort. Who?—he?—he is a wretch, a very
coward,
Hope not from him;—despise him, and forget
him!—

Mary. What say you?—

Mort. He deliver, and possess you!
Why let him dare it:—he!—he must with me
In mortal contest first deserve the prize!

Mary. You gave him not my letter? then, indeed,
My hopes are lost!—

Mort. The coward loves his life.
Whoe'er would rescue you, and call you his,
Must boldly dare affront e'en death!

Mary. And will he
Do nothing for me then?—

Mort. No more of him.—

What can he do? What need have we of him?
I will release you; I alone.—

Mary. Alas!

What pow'r have you?—

Mort. Deceive yourself no more;
Think not your case is now as formerly;
The moment that the Queen thus quitted you,
That your speech took this turn, that very moment
All hope wa's lost, each way of mercy shut.
Now deeds must speak, now boldness must decide;
Free must you be before the morning breaks.

Mary. What say you, Sir—to night?—impossible!

Mort. Hear how it is resolv'd :—I led my friends
Into a private chapel, where a priest
Heard our confession, and, for ev'ry sin
We had committed, gave us absolution;
He gave us absolution too, beforehand,
For ev'ry crime we might commit in future;
He gave us too the final sacrament,
And we are ready for the final journey.

Mary. O! what an awful, dreadful preparation!

Mort. We scale, this very night, the castle's walls;—
The keys are in my pow'r, the guards we murder!

Then from thy chamber bear thee forcibly.

Each living soul must die beneath our hands,

That none remain who might disclose the deed.

Mary. And Drury, Paulet, my two keepers, they
Would sooner spill their latest drop of blood—

Mort. They fall the very first beneath my steel.—

Mary. What, Sir!—your uncle? how! your
second father!—

Mort. Must perish by my hand,—I murder him!—

Mary. O, bloody outrage!

Mort. We have been absolv'd
Beforehand; I can now commit the utmost;—
I can, I will do so!—

Mary. O dreadful, dreadful!

Mort. And should I be oblig'd to kill the Queen,
I've sworn it on the host, it must be done!—

Mary. No, Mortimer;—e'er so much blood for me—

Mort. What is the life of all, compar'd to thee,
And to my love? The bond which holds the world
Together may be loos'd, a second deluge

Come rolling on, and swallow all creation!

I value nothing more; before I quit

My hold on thee, the world and time be ended!—

Mary. [*retiring.*] God!—Sir, what language, and
what looks! they frighten,

They scare me!

Mort. [*with unsteady looks, expressive of quiet madness.*]

Life is but a moment—Death

Is but a moment too.—Why! let them drag me

To Tyburn, let them tear me limb from limb,

With red-hot pincers—

[violently approaching her with extended arms.]

If I clasp but thee

Within my arms, thou fervently belov'd!—

Mary. Madman, a⁴vaunt!—

Mort. To rest upon this bosom,

To press upon this love-expiring mouth—

Mary. Leave me, for God's sake, Sir; let me go in—

Mort. He is a madman who neglects to clasp

His happiness in strictest close embrace,

When Heav'n has kindly giv'n it to his arms.—

I will deliver you, and though it cost

A thousand lives, I will: but I swear too,

As true as God's in Heav'n, I will possess you!—

Mary. O! will no God, no angel then protect me?

Dread destiny! thou throw'st me, in thy wrath,

From one tremendous terror to the other !
 Was I then only born to waken frenzy ?
 Conspire then hate and love, alike to fright me ?

Mart. Yes, glowing as their hatred is my love ;
 They would behead thee, they would wound this
 neck,

So dazzling white, with the disgraceful axe !
 O ! offer to the living god of joy
 What thou must sacrifice to bloody hatred !
 Inspire thy happy lover with those charms
 Which are no more thine own ; those golden locks
 Are forfeit to the dismal pow'rs of death,
 O ! use them to entwine thy slave for ever !—

Mary. Alas ! 'alas !, what language must I hear !
 My woe, my suff'rings should be sacred to you,
 Although my royal brows are so no more.—

Mort. The crown is fallen from thy brows, thou
 hast

No more of earthly majesty ; attempt it,
 Raise thy imperial voice, see if a friend,
 If a deliverer will rise to save you.—
 Thy moving form alone remains, the high,
 The godlike influence of thy heav'nly beauty ;

This bids me venture all, this arms my hand
With might, and drives me tow' rds the hangman's axe!

Mary. O! who will save me from his raging
madness?

Mort. Service that's bold, demands a bold reward.
Why shed their blood the daring?—is not life
Life's highest good? a madman, who in vain
Casts life away—first will I take my rest,
Enjoy my transports, on its warmest breast!—

[he presses her violently to his bosom.]

Mary. Must I then call for help against the man
Who would deliver me!—

Mort. Thou'rt not unfeeling,
The world ne'er censur'd thee for frigid rigour;
The fervent pray'r of love can touch thy heart,
Thou blessed'st formerly thy singer, Rizzio,
And suffer'dst Bothwell easily to win thee.

Mary. Presumptuous man!—

Mort. He was indeed thy tyrant,
Thou trembled'st at his rudeness, whilst thou lov'd'st
him;

Well then—if only terror can obtain thee
By the infernal gods!—

Mary. Away—you're mad !—

Mort. I'll teach thee then before *me* too to tremble—

Ken. [*entering suddenly.*] They're coming—they approach—the Park is fill'd

With men in arms.—

Mort. [*starting, and catching at his sword.*] I will defend you—I—

Mary. O Hannah! save me, save me from his hands,.

Where shall I find, poor suff'rer, an asylum?

O! to what saint shall I address my pray'rs?

Force here attacks me, and within is murder!

[*she flees toward the house, Kennedy follows her.*]

Mortimer, Paulet, and Drury rush in, in the greatest consternation.—*Attendants* hasten over the Stage.

Paul. Shut all the portals—draw the bridges up—

Mort. What is the matter, uncle?—

Paul. Where is the murther?

Down with her, down into the darkest dungeon!

Mort. What is the matter? What has pass'd—

Paul. The Queen !

Accursed hand ! infernal machination !

Mort. The Queen !—what Queen ?—

Paul. What Queen ! the Queen of England ;—
She has been murder'd on the road to London.—

[hastens into the house.]

Mortimer, soon after, O'Kelly.

Mort. *[after a pause.]* Am I then mad ? Came not
one running by

But now, and cried aloud, the Queen is muder'd ?—

No, no ; I did but dream ;—a fev'rish fancy

Paints that upon my mind as true and real,

Which but existed in my frantic thoughts.—

Who's there ? It is O'Kelly—so dismay'd—

O'Kelly. *[rushing in.]* Flee, Mortimer, O ! flee—
for all is lost !

Mort. What then is lost ?—

O'Kelly. O ! question me not long,

Think but on speedy flight.—

Mort. What then ?—

O' Kelly. Sauvage,
That madman, struck the blow.—

Mort. It is then true !

O' Kelly. True, true—O ! save yourself.—

Mort. [*exultingly.*] The Queen is murder'd,—
And conqu'ring Mary, mounts the English throne !

O' Kelly. Is murder'd ! who said that ?—

Mort. Yourself.—

O' Kelly. She lives,
And I, and you, and all of us are lost.

Mort. She lives !—

O' Kelly. The blow was badly aim'd, her cloak
Receiv'd it, Shrewsbury disarm'd the murd'rer.

Mort. She livés ! — .

O' Kelly. She lives to whelm us all in ruin ;
Come, they surroud the park already ; come—

Mort. Who did this frantic deed ?—

O' Kelly. It was the monk
From Toulon, whom you saw immers'd in thought,
As in the chapel the Pope's bull was read,
By which the Queen was anathemiz'd.—
He wish'd to take the nearest, shortest way,
To free, with one bold stroke, the church of God,

And gain the crown of martyrdom :—he trusted
 His purpose only to the priest, and put it
 In execution on the London road.

Mort. [*after a long silence.*] Alas ! a fierce destruc-
 tive fate pursues thee,

Unhappy one !—yes—now thy death is fix'd ;
 Thy very angel has prepar'd thy fall !—

O'Kelly. Say, whither you will take your flight ?

I go

To hide me in the forests of the north.

Mort. Fly thither, and may God attend your flight ;
 But I will strive my love once more to save,
 If not, I'll make my bed upon her grave.

[*Exeunt at different sides.*]

ACT IV.

Scene. — ANTI-CHAMBER.

Count L'Aubespine, the Earls of Kent and Leicester.

L' AUBESPINE.

How fares her Majesty my lords? you see me
Still stunn'd, and quite beside myself for terror?
How happen'd it? how was it possible
That, in the midst of this most loyal people—

Lei. The deed was not attempted by the people;
The murderer was a subject of your king,
A Frenchman.—

L'Aub. Sure a lunatic.—

Lei. A Papist,
Count L'Aubespine.

To them, Burleigh in conversation with Davison.

Burl. Sir; let the death-warrant
Be instantly made out, and pass the seal;

Then let it be presented to the Queen;
 Her Majesty must sign it.—Hasten, Sir,
 We have no time to lose.

Dav. It shall be done. *[he goes.]*

L'Aub. My lord high Treasurer, my faithful heart
 Partakes the just rejoicings of the realm;
 Prais'd be almighty God, who hath averted
 Assassination from our much-lov'd Queen!—

Bur. Prais'd be his name, who thus hath turn'd to
 scorn

The malice of our foes!—

L'Aub. May God confound
 The perpetrator of this cursed deed!—

Bur. Its perpetrator and its base contriver!—

L'Aub. Please you, my lord, to bring me to the
 Queen,

That I may lay the warm congratulations
 Of my imperial master at her feet.

Bur. There is no need of this.

L'Aub. *[officially.]* My lord of Burleigh,
 I know my duty.—

Bur. Sir, your duty is
 To quit, and that without delay, this kingdom.—

L'Aub. [*stepping back with signs of wonder.*] How!
what was that?—

Bur. The sacred character
Of an Ambassador to-day protects you,
But not to-morrow.—

L'Aub. What's my crime?—

Bur. Should I
Once name it, there were then no pardon for it.—

L'Aub. I hope, my lord, my charge's privilege—

Bur. Screens not a traitor.

Lei. *and* Kent. What was that?—

L'Aub. My lord,
Consider well—

Bur. Your passport was discover'd
In the assassin's pocket.—

Kent. Righteous heav'n!

L'Aub. Sir, many passports are subscrib'd by me,
I cannot know the secret thoughts of men.

Bur. He in your house confess'd, and was absolv'd—

L'Aub. My house is open—

Bur. To *our* enemies.

L'Aub. I claim a strict inquiry—

Bur. Tremble at it—

L'Aub. My monarch, in my person, is insulted,
He will annul the marriage contract.—

Bur. That

My royal mistress has annull'd already ;
England will not unite herself with France.
My lord of Kent, I give it you in charge
To see the Count L'Aubespine embark'd in safety.
The furious populace has storm'd his palace,
Where a whole arsenal of arms was found ;
And should they see him they would tear him piece-
meal.

Conceal him till their fury is abated,—

You answer for his life.—

L'Aub. I go—I leave

This kingdom, where they sport with public treaties,
And trample on the laws of nations : yet
My monarch, be assur'd, will vent his rage
In bloody vengeance!—

Bur. Let him seek it here.

[*Exeunt Kent and L'Aubespine.*]

Leicester, Burleigh.

Lei. And thus you loose, yourself, the knot of union
Which you officiously, uncall'd for, bound !
You have deserv'd but little of your country,
My lord ; this trouble was superfluous.

Bur. My aim was good, though fate declar'd against
it ;

Happy is he who has so fair a conscience !

Lei. Well know we the mysterious mien of
Burleigh,

When he is on the hunt for deeds of treason.

Now you are in your element, my lord ;

A monstrous outrage has been just committed,

And darkness veils, as yet, its perpetrators :—

Now will a court of inquisition rise ;

Each word, each look be weigh'd ; men's very thoughts

Be call'd before the bar ; and you, my lord,

Are the important man, the mighty Atlas

Of state, all England rests upon your shoulders.

Bur. In you, my lord, I recognize my master ;

For such a vict'ry, as your eloquence
Has gain'd, I cannot boast.—

Lei. My lord, your meaning.—

Bur. You were the man who knew, behind my
back,

To lure the Queen to Fotheringay-castle.

Lei. Behind your back! when did I fear to act
Before your face?—

Bur. You led her Majesty?

O, no—you led her not—it was the Queen
Who was so gracious to conduct you thither.

Lei. What mean you, lord, by that?—

Bur. The noble part
You forc'd the Queen to play! the glorious triumph
Which you prepar'd for her! too gracious princess!
So shamelessly, so wantonly to mock
Thy unsuspecting goodness, to betray thee
So pitiless to thy exulting foe!
This then's the magnanimity, the grace
Which suddenly possess'd you in the council!
This Stuart is for this so despicable,
So weak an enemy, that it would scarce
Be worth the pains, to stain us with her blood.

A specious plan ! and sharply pointed too ;
 'Tis only pity this sharp point is broken.

Lei. Unworthy wretch !—this instant follow me,
 And answer, at the throne, this insolence.

Bur. You'll find me there, my lord ; and take but
 care,
 That *there* your eloquence may not desert you. [*Exit.*

Leicester, alone ; then Mortimer.

Lei. I am detected ! all my plot's disclos'd !
 How has my evil genius trac'd my steps !
 Alas ! if he has proofs, if she should learn
 That I have held a secret correspondence
 With her worst enemy ; how criminal
 Shall I appear to her ! how false and treach'rous
 Will seem my counsel, and the fatal pains
 I took to lure the Queen to Fotheringay !
 I've shamefully betray'd, I have expos'd her
 To her detested enemy's revilings !
 O ! never, never can she pardon that—
 All will appear as if premeditated.

The bitter turn of this sad interview,
 The triumph and the tauntings of her rival;
 Yes, e'en the murd'rous hand, which had prepar'd
 A bloody, monstrous, unexpected fate;
 All, all will be ascrib'd to my suggestions!
 I see no prospect!—no where—ha! who comes?

*[Mortimer enters, in the most violent uneasiness, and
 looks with apprehension round him.]*

Mort. Lord Leicester! Is it you? are we alone?

Lei. Ill-fated wretch, away! what seek you here?

Mort. They are upon our track—upon your's too,
 Be vigilant!—

Lei. Away, away!—

Mort. They know
 That private conferences have been held
 At L'Aubespine's—

Lei. What's that to me?—

Mort. They know too
 That the assassin—

Lei. That is your affair—
 Audacious wretch! to dare to mix my name
 In your detested outrage: go; defend,
 Yourself, your bloody deeds!—

Mort. But only hear me.—

Lei. [*violently enraged.*] Down, down to hell!—why
cling you at my heels

Like an infernal spirit!—I disclaim you—
I know you not—I make no common cause
With murderers!—

Mort. You will not hear me then!—
I came to warn you—you too are detected.—

Lei. How! what?—

Mort. Lord Burleigh went to Fotheringay,
Just as the luckless deed had been attempted;
Search'd with severest care the Queen's apartments,
And found there—

Lei. What?—

Mort. A letter which the Queen
Had just address'd to you—

Lei. Unhappy woman!—

Mort. In which she calls on you to keep your
word,
Renews the promise of her hand, and mentions
The picture which she sent you.—

Lei. Death and hell!—

Mort. Lord Burleigh has the letter—

Lei. I am lost!—

[*During the following speech of Mortimer, Leicester goes up and down, as in despair.*

Mort. Improve the moment; be beforehand with him,

And save yourself—save her!—an oath can clear
Your fame; think of excuses to avert
The worst.—*I* am disarm'd, can do no more;
'Tis now your turn, my lord—try what your weight,
What bold assurance can effect.—

Lei. [*stops suddenly, as if resolved.*]—I will—

[*goes to the door, opens it, and calls.*

Who waits there? Guards!

[*to the Officer who comes in with Soldiers.*

Take in your charge this traitor,
And guard him closely!—a most dreadful plot
Is brought to light.—I'll to her Majesty,
And—

Mort. [*stands at first immoveable for wonder: collects himself soon, and follows Leicester with his looks expressive of the most sovereign contempt.*] Infamous wretch!—But I deserve it all.

Who told me then to trust this practis'd villain?

Now strides he o'er my head; and o'er my ruins
 He builds the bridge of safety!—be it so—
 Go, save thyself—my lips are clos'd for ever;—
 I will not join e'en thee in my destruction—
 I would not own thee, no, not e'en in death;
 Life is the faithless villain's only good!—

[to the Officer of the guard, who steps forward to seize him.]

What wilt thou, slave of tyranny, with me?
 I scorn thy threat'nings—I am free. *[drawing a dagger.]*

Officer. He's arm'd;—rush in, and wrest his weapon
 from him. *[they rush upon him, he defends himself.]*

Mort. *[raising his voice.]* And in this latest moment,
 shall my heart

Expand itself in freedom, and my tongue
 Shall break this long constraint.—Curse and destruction

Upon you all, who have betray'd your God,
 And your true sov'reign! who, alike estrang'd,
 To earthly Mary false as to the heav'nly,
 Have sold your duties to this bastard Queen!

Officer. Hear you these blasphemies?—rush forward
 —seize him!

Mort. Beloved Queen ! I could not set thee free ;
Yet take from me a lesson how to die.

Maria, holy one, O ! pray for me !

Receive me in thy heav'nly arms on high !

[stabs himself, and falls into the arms of the guard.]

THE APARTMENT OF THE QUEEN.

Elizabeth, with a letter in her hand, Burleigh.

Eliz. To lure me thither ! thus to sport with me !
The traitor ! thus to lead me, as in triumph,
To glut the vengeance of his paramour.
O, Burleigh ! ne'er was woman so deceiv'd.

Bur. I cannot yet conceive what potent means,
What magic he exerted, to surprise
My Queen's accusom'd prudence.—

Eliz. O, I die
For shame ! how must he laugh to scorn my weakness.
I thought to humble *her*, and was myself,
Myself the object of her scorn.—

Bur. By this
You see how faithfully I counsell'd you.

Eliz. O, I am sorely¹ pupish'd, that I turn'd
 My ear from your wise counsels ; yet I thought
 I might confide in him. Who could suspect,
 Beneath the oath of faithfullest devotion,
 A deadly snare ?—who can I then confide in,
 When he deceives me ? he, whom I have made
 The greatest of the great, whom I've distinguish'd
 As next to my own person, whom I've suffer'd
 To play, at court, the master and the king.

Bur. Yet in that very moment he betray'd you,
 Betray'd you to this wily Queen of Scots.—

Eliz. O, she shall pay me for it with her blood !—
 Is the death-warrant ready ?

Bur. 'Tis prepar'd
 As you commanded it.—

Eliz. Yes ; she shall die—
 He shall behold her fall, and fall himself !
 I've driv'n him from my heart ;—my favour's lost,
 Revenge alone employs me. High as once
 He stood, so low and shameful be his fall !
 A monument of my severity,
 As once the proud example of my weakness.
 Conduct him to the tow'r ; let a commission

Be nam'd to try him. Yes! the worthless man
Shall feel the utmost rigour of the law.

Bur. But he will seek thy presence; he will clear—

Eliz. How can he clear himself? does not the letter
Convict him! O, his crimes are clear as day!.

Bur. But thou art mild and gracious! his appearance,
His pow'ful presence—

Eliz. I will never see him;
No never, never more. Are orders giv'n
Not to admit him should he come?

Bur. 'Tis done.

Page. [*entering.*] The Earl of Leicester—

Eliz. The presumptuous man!
I will not see him;—tell him that I will not.

Page. I am afraid to bring my lord this message,
Nor would he credit it.—

Eliz. I rais'd him then
So high, that my own servants tremble more
At him than me!

Bur. [*to the Page.*] The Queen forbids his presence.
[*the Page retires slowly.*]

Eliz. [*after a pause.*] Yet, if it still were possible?
If he

*Could clear himself? Might it not be a snare
Laid by the cunning one, to sever me
From my best friend—the treach'rous hyæna!
She might have wrote the letter, but to raise
Pois'rous suspicion in my heart, to ruin
The man she hates.—*

Bur. Yet, gracious Queen, consider—

*To them, Leicester. [Bursts open the door with violence,
and enters with an imperious air.]*

Lei. Fain would I see the shameless man, who dares
Forbid me the apartments of my Queen!—

Eliz. [*avoiding his sight.*] Audacious slave!—

Lei. To turn me from the door!—

If for a Burleigh she be visible,
She is so too for me!

Bur. My lord, you are
Too bold, without permission to intrude—

Lei. My lord, you are too arrogant, to take
The lead in these apartments.—What! permission!
I know of none, who stands so high at court

As to permit my doings, or refuse them.

[humbly approaching Elizabeth.]

'Tis from my Sov'reigns lips alone that I—

Eliz. [without looking at him.] Out of my sight,
deceitful, worthless traitor !

Lei. 'Tis not my gracious Queen I hear, but
Burleigh,

My enemy, in these unkind expressions.—

To my imperial mistress I appeal;

Thou hast lent him thy ear ; I ask the like.—

Eliz. Speak, shameless wretch ! increase your
crime—deny it—

Lei. Dismiss me first this troublesome intruder.—

Withdraw, my lord ; it is not of your office

To play the third man here : between the Queen

And me there is no need of witnesses.

Retire—

Eliz. [to Burleigh.] Remain, my lord ; 'tis my
command.

Lei. What has a third to do, 'twixt thee and me ?

I have to clear myself before my Queen,

My worshipp'd Queen ; I will maintain the rights

Which thou hast given me : these rights are sacred,

And I insist upon it that my lord

Retire.—

Eliz. This haughty language well becomes you—

Lei. Yes, well it fits me ; am not I the man,
The happy man, to whom thy gracious favour
Has giv'n the highest station ; this exalts me
Above this Burleigh, and above them all.
Thy heart imparted me this rank, and what
Thy favour gave, by heav'ns I will maintain
At my life's hazard ! let him go, it needs
Two moments only to exculpate me.

Eliz. Think not, with cunning words, to hide the
truth.

Lei. That fear from him, the everlasting talker ;
But what I say, is to the heart address'd ;
And I will justify what I've dar'd
To do, confiding in thy gen'rous favour,
Before thy heart alone. I recognize
No other jurisdiction.—

Eliz. Base deceiver !

'Tis this, e'en this which above all condemns you.

My lord, produce the letter.

[to Burleigh.

Bur. Here it is.

Lei. [*running over the letter without losing his presence of mind.*] It's Mary Stuart's hand—

Eliz. Read, and be dumb !

Lei. [*having read it quietly.*] Appearance is against me ; yet I hope

I shall not by appearances be judg'd.

Eliz. Can you deny your secret correspondence With Mary ?—that *she* sent, and *you* receiv'd Her picture, that you gave her hopes of rescue ?

Lei. It were an easy matter, if I felt That I were guilty of a crime, to challenge The testimony of my enemy : Yet bold is my good conscience.—I confess That she has said the truth.—

Eliz. Well then, thou wretch !—

Bur. His own words sentence him—

Eliz. Out of my sight !

Away ! conduct the traitor to the tow'r !—

Lei. I am no traitor ; it was wrong, indeed, To make a secret of this step to *thee* ;— Yet pure was my intention, it was done To search into her plots and to confound them.—

Eliz. Vain subterfuge !—

Bur. And think you then, my lord—

Lei. I've play'd a dang'rous game, I know it well,
And none but Leicester dare be bold enough
To risk it at this court; the world must know
How I detest this Stuart, and the rank
Which here I hold, my Monarch's confidence,
With which she honours me, must sure suffice
To overturn all doubts of my intentions.
Well may the man thy favour above all
Distinguishes strike out a bolder way
To do his duty!—

Bur. Was the way a good one?
Why then conceal it?—

Lei. You are us'd, my lord,
To prate before you act, the very chime
Of your own deeds; this is your manner, lord;
But mine, is first to act, and then to speak.

Bur. Yes; now you speak, because you must.—

Lei. [*measuring him proudly and disdainfully with his eyes.*] And you
Boast of a wonderful, a mighty action,
That you have sav'd the Queen, have snatch'd away
The mask from treach'ry:—all is known to you;

You think, forsooth, that nothing can escape
 Your penetrating eyes :—poor, idle boaster !
 In spite of all your art, Maria Stuart
 Was free to day, had *I* not hinder'd it.—

Bur. How ? *you* ?—

Lei. Yes *I*, my lord : the Queen confided
 In Mortimer ; she open'd to the youth
 Her inmost soul ;—yes, she went farther still ;
 She gave him too a secret bloody charge,
 Which Paulet had before refus'd with horror.
 Say, is it so, or not ?—

*[the Queen and Burleigh look at one another, with
 astonishment.]*

Bur. Whence know you this ?

Lei. Is it not so ? Well then, my lord, where were
 Your thousand eyes, that you discover'd not
 That this same Mortimer was cheating you ;
 That he, the Guise's tool, and Mary's creature,
 A raging Papist, a resolv'd fanatic,
 Was come to rescue her, was come to murder
 The Queen of England !—

Eliz. *[with the utmost astonishment.]* How !—this
 Mortimer ?

Lei. 'Twas he through whom our correspondence
pass'd ;

This plot it was which introduc'd me to him.

This very day she was to have been torn

From her confinement ; he, this very moment,

Disclos'd to me his plan : I took him pris'ner,

And gave him to the guard, when in despair

To see his work o'erturn'd, himself unmask'd,

He put himself to death !

Eliz. O, I have been

Deceiv'd beyond example ! Mortimer !

Bur. This happen'd then but now ; now since we
parted.

Lei. I must lament it now, for my own sake,

That he was thus cut off ; his testimony,

Had he but liv'd, had fully clear'd my fame,

And freed me from suspicion :—'twas for this

That I thus gave him up to open justice.

I thought to choose the most impartial course

To verify and fix before the world

My innocence.—

Bur. He kill'd himself, you say :

Is't so ? or did *you* kill him ?—

Lei. Vile suspicion !

Hear but the guard who seiz'd him.—

[he goes to the door, and calls.

Ho ! who waits ?

[the officer of the guard comes.

Sir, tell the Queen, how Mortimer expir'd.

Officer. I was upon my station in the palace,
As my Lord Leicester sudden op'd the door,
And order'd me to take the knight in charge,
Declaring him a traitor : upon this
He grew enrag'd, and with most bitter curses
Against our sov'reign, and our holy faith,
He drew a dagger, and before the guards
Could hinder his intention, plung'd the steel
Into his heart, and fell a lifeless corpse.

Lei. 'Tis well ; you may withdraw, her Majesty
Has heard enough. *[the officer withdraws.*

Eliz. O ! what a deep abyss
Of monstrous deeds !

Lei. Who was it then, my Queen,
Who sav'd you ?—Was it Burleigh ? did he know
The dangers which surrounded you ? did he
Avert them from your head ?—Your faithful Leicester
Was your good angel.—

Bur. This same Mortimer
Died most conveniently for you, Lord Leicester.

Eliz. What I should say I know not; I believe you,
And I believe you not :—I think you guilty,
And I think you are not guilty. Curse on her
Who caus'd me all this anguish !

Lei. She must die—
I now insist myself upon her death.
I formerly advis'd you to suspend
The judgment, till some arm should rise anew
For her protection ; now the case has happen'd,
And I demand her instant execution.—

Burl. You give this counsel ?—*you?*—

Lei. Howe'er it wound
My feelings to be forc'd to this extreme,
Yet now I see must clearly, now I feel
That the Queen's welfare asks this bloody victim.
'Tis my proposal, therefore, that the writ
Be straight drawn up, to fix the execution.

Bur. [*to the Queen.*] Since then his lordship shews
such earnest zeal,
Such loyalty, 'twere well, were he appointed
To see the execution of the sentence.—

Lei. Who?—I?—

Bur. Yes, *you*; you surely ne'er could find
A better mean to shake off the suspicion
Which rests upon you still, than to command
Her, whom 'tis said you love, to be beheaded.

Eliz. [*looking stedfastly at Leicester.*] My lord advises well :—so be it then.—

Lei. It were but fit that my exalted rank
Should free me from so mournful a commission,
Which would indeed, in ev'ry sense, become
A Burleigh better than the Earl of Leicester.
The man who stands so near the royal person
Should have no knowledge of such fatal scenes :
But yet, to prove my zeal, to satisfy
My Queen, I wave my charge's privilege,
And take upon me this so hateful duty.

Eliz. Lord Burleigh shares with you this duty.

Let

[*to Burleigh.*

The warrant be prepar'd without delay.

[*Burleigh withdraws ; a tumult heard without.*

The Queen, Leicester, the Earl of Kent.

Eliz. How now, my lord of Kent? What's that
disturbance.

I hear without?—

Kent. My Queen, it is thy people,
Which, rang'd around the palace, with impatience
Demand to see their sovereign.

Eliz. What's their wish?

Kent. A panic terror has already spread
Through London, that thy life has been attempted;
That murderers commission'd from the Pope
Beset thee; that the Catholics have sworn
To rescue from her prison Mary Stuart,
And to proclaim her Queen—thy loyal people
Believe it, and are mad—her head alone
Can quiet them—this day must be her last.

Eliz. How! will they force me then?—

Kent. They are resolv'd—

To them, Burleigh and Davison, with a paper.

Eliz. Well, Davison?

Dav. [*approaches earnestly.*] Your orders are obey'd,
My Queen—

Eliz. What orders, Sir? [*as she is about to take the
paper, she shudders, and starts back.*] O God!—

Bur. Obey

Thy people's voice ; it is the voice of God.—

Eliz. [*irresolute, as if in contest with herself.*] O my
good lord, who can now surely say
If what I hear 's the voice of my whole people,
The meaning of the world ; how much I fear,
That, if I now should listen to the wish
Of the majority, a diff'rent voice
Might soon be heard ;—yes ; that those very men,
Who now by force 'oblige me to this step,
May, when 'tis taken, heavily condemn me !

*To them, the Earl of Shrewsbury. [who enters with
great emotion.]*

Hold fast, my Queen, they wish to hurry thee;
Be firm— *[seeing Davison with the Paper,*
Or is it then decided?—is it
Indeed decided? I behold a paper,
Of ominous appearance in his hand;
Let it not at this moment meet thy eyes,
My Queen—

Eliz. Good Shrewsbury! I am constrain'd—

Shrews. Who can constrain thee? Thou art Queen
of England,

Here must thy Majesty assert its rights:
Command those savage voices to be silent,
Who take upon themselves to put constraint
Upon thy royal will, to rule thy judgment.
Fear only, blind conjecture moves thy people;
Thou art thyself beside thyself; thy wrath
Is grievously provok'd: thou art but mortal,
Thou canst not thus ascend the seat of judgment.

Bur. Judgment has long been past; it is not now
The time to speak, but execute the sentence.

Kent. [*who, on Shrewsbury's entry, had retired, comes back.*] The tumult gains apace; there are no means
To moderate the people.—

Eliz. [*to Shrewsbury.*] See, my lord,
How they press on.—

Shrews. I only ask a respite;
A single word trac'd by thy hand may scare.
The peace, the happiness of thy existence!
Thou hast for years consider'd, let not then
A moment rul'd by passion hurry thee—
But a short respite—recollect thyself;
Wait for a moment of tranquillity.—

Bur. [*violently.*] Wait for it—pause—delay—till
flames of fire
Consume the realm; until the fifth attempt
Of murder be successful! God indeed
Hath thrice deliver'd thee; thy late escape
Was marvellous, and to expect again
A miracle would be to tempt thy God!

Shrews. That God, whose potent hand hath thrice
preserv'd thee,

Who lent my aged feeble arm the strength
 To overcome the madman ; *he* deserves
 Thy confidence. I will not raise the voice
 Of justice now, for now is not the time ;
 Thou canst not hear it in this storm of passion.
 Yet listen but to this : thou tremblest now
 Before this living Mary—tremble rather
 Before the murder'd, the beheaded Mary.
 She will arise, and quit her grave, will range
 A fiend of discord, and a spirit of vengeance
 Around thy realm, and turn thy people's hearts
 From their allegiance. As yet the Britons
 Hate her, because they fear her ; but most surely
 They will avenge her, when she is no more.
 They will no more behold the enemy
 Of their belief, they will but see in her
 The much-lamented issue of their kings
 A sacrifice to jealousy and hatred.
 Then quickly shalt thou see the sudden change,
 When thou hast done the bloody deed ; then go
 Through London, seek thy people, which till now
 Delighted swarm'd around thee ; thou shalt see
 Another England, and another people ;

For then no more the godlike dignity
 Of justice, which subdued thy subjects' hearts,
 Will beam around thee ; Fear, the dread attendant
 Of tyranny, will shudd'ring march before thee,
 And desolate each path on which thou go'st !—
 The last, extremest crime thou hast committed.
 What head is safe, if the anointed fall ?

Eliz. Ah ! Shrewsbury, you sav'd my life, you
 turn'd

The murd'rous steel aside ; why let you not
 The dagger take its course ? then all contentions
 Would have been ended, then releas'd from doubt,
 And free from blame, I should be now at rest
 In my still peaceful grave.—Forsobth with reason
 I'm weary of my life, and of my crown.
 If one of us must perish to secure .
 The other's life, and so it is, I must
 Acknowledge it, cannot then I be she
 Who yields ? Then let my people take their choice ;
 I give them back their Majesty, and call
 My God to witness, that I have not liv'd .
 For my own sake, but for my people's welfare.
 If they expect from this false, fawning Stuart,

The younger sovereign, more happy days,
 I will descend with pleasure from this throne,
 Again repair to Woodstock's quiet bow'rs,
 Where once I spent my unpretending youth ;
 Where I, remov'd from all the vanities
 Of earthly greatness, found within myself
 True Majesty. I am not made to rule—
 A ruler should be made of sterner stuff :
 My heart is soft and tender. I have govern'd
 These many years, this kingdom happily,
 But then I only needed to make happy ;
 Now, comes the first important kingly duty,
 And now I feel my weakness. Go, my lords—

Bur. Now by my faith, when I must hear my Queen,
 My royal liege, speak such unroyal words,
 I should betray my office, should betray
 My country, were I longer to be silent.
 Thou say'st thou lov'st above thyself thy people,
 Now prove it ; choose not peace for thy own heart,
 And leave thy people to the storms of discord.
 Think on the church ; shall, with this Papist-Queen,
 The ancient superstition be renew'd ?
 The monks rule here again, the Roman legate

In pomp march hither ; lock our churches up,
 Dethrone our monarchs ?—I demand of thee
 The souls of all thy subjects—as thou now
 Shalt act, they all are sav'd, or all are lost !
 Here is no time for mercy ; to promote
 Thy people's welfare is thy highest duty.—
 Well then—If Shrewsbury sav'd thy life, I too
 Will save both thee, and England, that is more.—

Eliz. I would be left alone : no consolation,
 No counsel can be drawn in this conjuncture
 From human wisdom :—I will lay my doubts
 Before the highest judge :—I am resolv'd
 To act as he directs. Withdraw, my lords.

[to Davison, who lays the paper on the table.]

You, Sir, remain in waiting—go not far.

[the Lords withdraw; Shrewsbury alone stands for a few moments before the Queen, regards her significantly, then withdraws slowly, and with an expression of the deepest anguish.]

Elizabeth, alone.

O, servitude of popularity !
 Disgraceful slavery ! how weary am I

Of flattering this idol, which my soul
 Despises ! when shall I again be free
 Upon this throne ? the public voice I must
 Respect ; to gain the multitude's applause
 I must abase myself, must suit my actions
 To please the fancies of a mob, which nought
 But jugglers' tricks delight.—O call not him
 A king, who's forc'd to please the world, 'tis he
 Alone, who in his actions need not count
 The fickle approbation of mankind.—
 Have I then practis'd justice, all my life
 Shunn'd each despotic deed ; have I done this,
 Only to bind my hands against this first,
 This necessary act of violence ?
 The example, which I gave myself, condemns me
 Had I but been a tyrant, like my sister,
 My predecessor, I could fearless then
 Have shed this royal blood :—but was I then
 Just by my own free choice ?—no—I was forc'd
 By stern necessity to use this virtue ;
 Necessity, which binds e'en monarchs' wills.
 Surrounded by my foes, my people's love
 Alone supports me on my envied throne.

All pow'rs of Europe seek but my destruction ;
 The Pope's inveterate decree declares me
 Accurst and excommunicated.—France
 Betrays me with a kiss, and Spain prepares
 At sea a fierce exterminating war :
 Thus stand I, in contention with the world,
 A poor defenceless woman : I must seek
 To hide the spot in my imperial birth,
 By which my Father once himself disgrac'd me
 In vain with princely virtues would I hide it ;
 The envious hatred of my enemies
 Uncovers it, and places Mary Stuart
 Before me an eternal threat'ning fiend !
 [walking up and down, with quick and agitated steps.]
 O no! this fear must end ; her head must fall :
 I *will* have peace—she is the very fury
 Of my existence: a tormenting dæmon,
 Which destiny has fasten'd on my soul.
 Wherever I had planted me a comfort,
 A flatt'ring hope, my way was ever cross'd
 By this infernal viper !—she has torn
 My fav'rite from me, and my bridegroom too ;
 The hated name of ev'ry ill I feel

Is Mary Stuart.—be but she no more
On earth, I shall be free as mountain air.

[standing still.

With what disdain did she look down on me,
As if her eye should blast me like the lightning !
Poor feeble wretch ! I bear far other arms,
Their touch is mortal, and thou art no more.

*[advancing to the table with hasty strides, and taking
the pen.*

Thou say'st I am a bastard—well—a bastard—
Thy death may make my birth legitimate.
The moment I destroy thee, is the doubt
Destroy'd, which hangs o'er my imperial right.
As soon as England has no other choice,
My mother's honour and my birth-right triumphs !

*[she signs with resolution ; lets her pen then fall,
and steps back with an expression of terror.—
After a pause, she rings.*

Elizabeth, Davison.

Eliz. Where are their lordships ?—
Dav. They are gone to quell

The tumult of the people :—the alarm
 Was instantly appeas'd, as they beheld
 The Earl of Shrewsbury ; that's he ! exclaim'd
 An hundred voices—that's the man—he sav'd
 The Queen ; hear *him*—the noblest man in England !
 And now began the gallant Talbot, blam'd
 In gentle words the people's violence,
 And spoke so strong, so forcibly persuasive,
 That all were pacifi'd, and silently
 They stole away.—

Eliz. The fickle multitude !
 Which turns with ev'ry wind.—Unhappy he
 Who leans upon this reed !—'Tis well, Sir William ;
 You may retire again— [*as he is going towards the door.*
 And, Sir, this Paper,
 Receive it back ; I place it in your hands.

Dav. [*casts a look upon the Paper, and starts back.*]
 My gracious Queen—thy name !—'tis then decided.

Eliz. I had but to subscribe it—I have done so—
 A paper sure cannot decide—a name
 Kills not—

Dav. Thy name, my Queen, beneath this Paper,
 Is most decisive—kills—'tis like the lightning,

Which takes its flight, and blasts! this fatal scroll
 Commands the Sheriff and Commissioners
 Straight to proceed to Fotheringay-castle,
 And to announce unto the Queen of Scots
 Her death; which sentence must be executed
 E'er the next morning breaks. Here is no respite—
 As soon as I have parted with this writ,
 Her race is run—

Eliz. Yes, Sir, the Lord has plac'd
 This weighty bus'ness in your feeble hands;
 Seek him in pray'r, to light you with his wisdom;
 I go—and leave you, Sir, to do your duty.— [*going.*]

Dav. No; leave me not, my Queen, till I have
 heard

Your will; the only wisdom that I need,
 Is, word for word, to follow your commands.
 Say, have you plac'd this Paper in my hands,
 To put it into instant execution?

Eliz. That you must do, as your own prudence
 dictates.

Dav. [*interrupting her quickly, and alarmed.*] Not
 mine—O God forbid! my only prudence
 Is my obedience.—No point must here

Be left to be decided by your servant ;
 A small mistake would here be regicide,
 A monstrous crime, a crime past all expression !
 Permit me, in this weighty act, to be
 Your passive instrument, without a will ;—
 Tell me in plain undoubted terms your pleasure,
 What with the bloody mandate I should do.—

Eliz. Its name declares its meaning.—

Dav. Will you then,
 That it should instantly be executed ?

Eliz. I said not that ; I tremble but to think it.—

Dav. That I should keep it then 'till further
 orders ?—

Eliz. At your own risk ; you answer the event.—

Dav. I !—God in heav'n !—O speak, my Queen,
 your pleasure !—

Eliz. My pleasure is, that this unhappy bus'ness
 Be no more mention'd to me ; that at last
 I may be freed from it, and that for ever.—

Dav. It costs you but a word—determine then ;
 What shall I do with this mysterious scroll ?

Eliz. I *have* declar'd it—plague me then no
 longer.—

Dav. You *have* declar'd it? say you? O, my
Queen,

You have said nothing; please my gracious mistress
But to remember—

Eliz. [*stamps on the ground.*] Insupportable!

Dav. O, be indulgent to me!—I have enter'd
Unwittingly, not many months ago,
This weighty office; I know not the language
Of courts and kings; I ever have been rear'd
In simple, open wise, a plain blunt man.—
Be patient with me; nor deny your servant
A light to lead him clearly to his duty.

*[he approaches her in a supplicating posture, she
turns her back on him; he stands in despair:
then speaks with a tone of resolution.]*

Take, take again this paper—take it back—
Within my hands, it is a glowing fire.
Select not me, my Queen; select not me
To serve you, in this terrible conjuncture.

Eliz. Go, Sir;—fulfil the duty of your office!

[*Exit.*

Davison, then Burleigh.

Dav. She goes—she leaves me doubting, and perplex'd

With this dread paper!—how to act I know not;
Should I retain it, should I forward it?

[to Burleigh, who enters.]

Oh! it is well that you are here, my Lord,
'Tis you who have preferr'd me to this charge;
Now free me from it, for I undertook it,
Unknowing how responsible it made me.
Let me then seek again the solitude,
In which you found me; this is not my place.

Bur. How now? take courage, Sir; where is the warrant?—

The Queen was with you.

Dav. She has quitted me
In bitter anger.—O advise me, help me,
Save me from this fell agony of doubt!
My Lord, here is the warrant: it is sign'd!—

Bur. Indeed?—O give it, give it me.—

Dav. I may not.—

Bur. How !—

Dav. She has not as yet explain'd her pleasure.

Bur. Explain'd ! She has subscrib'd it ;—give it
me.—

Dav. I am to execute it—I am not
To execute it—God ! I know not what !

Bur. [*urging more violently.*] It must be now, this
moment, executed—

The warrant, Sir ; you're lost if you delay.—

Dav. So am I also, if I act too rashly.—

Bur. What strange infatuation ! give it me.

[*snatches the paper from him, and goes off with it.*]

Dav. What mean you ?—stop—you plunge me
in destruction !

ACT V.

THE SCENE THE SAME AS IN THE FIRST ACT.

Hannah Kennedy in deep mourning, her eyes still red from weeping, in great but quiet anguish, is employed in sealing letters and parcels. Her sorrow often interrupts her occupation, and she is seen at such intervals to pray in silence. Paulet and Drury, also in mourning, enter, followed by many servants, who bear golden and silver vessels, mirrors, paintings, and other valuables, and fill the back part of the stage with them: Paulet delivers to the Nurse a box of jewels and a paper, and seems to inform her by signs, that it contains the inventory of the effects the Queen had brought with her. At the sight of these riches, the anguish of the Nurse is renewed; she sinks into a deep, gloomy melancholy, during which Drury, Paulet, and the Servants, silently retire.

Melvil enters.

KENNEDY. [*screams aloud, as soon as she observes him.*]

MELVIL! is't you? behold I you again?

Mel. Yes, faithful Kennedy, we meet again.

Ken. After this long, long, painful separation !

Mel. A most deplorable, most painful meeting !

Ken. You come—

Mel. To take an everlasting leave,

To bid the last farewell to my dear Queen.

Ken. And now at length, now on the fatal morn
Which brings her death, they grant our royal lady
The presence of her friends.—O, worthy Sir,
I will not question you how you have far'd,
Will not tell you the suff'rings which we suffer'd,
Since you were torn away from us:—alas !
There will be time enough for this hereafter.
O, Melvil, Melvil, why was it our fate
To see the dawn of this unhappy day !

Mel. Let us not melt each other with our grief.—
Throughout my whole remaining life, as long
As ever it may be, I'll sit and weep ;
A smile shall never more light up these cheeks,
This sable garment never will I more
Lay off, will live in everlasting mourning ;
But this one day, will I be firm ; and you,
Pledge me your faith to moderate your sorrow ;
And when the others, all depriv'd of comfort,

Abandon'd to despair wail round her, *we*
 Will lead her with heroic resolution,
 And be her staff upon the road to death !

Ken. Melvil ! You are deceiv'd, if you suppose
 The Queen has need of our support to meet
 Her death with firmness.—*She* it is, my friend,
 Who will present us with the fair example
 Of noble courage ; trust me, Mary Stuart
 Will as a queen, and heroine expire !

Mel. Receiv'd she then with firmness, the sad
 tidings
 Of death?—'tis said that she was not prepar'd.

Ken. She was not ; yet they were far other terrors
 Which made our lady shudder : 'twas not death,
 But her deliv'rer, which made her tremble.
 Freedom, was promis'd us ; this very night
 Had Mortimer engag'd to bear us hence :
 And thus the Queen, perplex'd 'twixt hope and fear,
 And doubting still if she should trust her honour
 And royal person to th' advent'rous youth,
 Sat waiting for the morning :—on a sudden
 We hear a boist'rous tumult in the castle ;
 Our ears are startled by repeated blows

Of many hammers, and we think we hear
 The approach of our deliv'ers;—hope salutes us,
 And suddenly and unresisted, wakes
 The sweet desire of life.—And now at once
 The portals are thrown open—it is Paulet,
 Who comes to tell us—that the carpenters
 Erect beneath our feet the murd'rous scaffold!—

[she turns aside, overpowered by excessive anguish.]

Mel. 'O God in Heav'n! O tell me thien, how bore
 The Queen this terrible vicissitude?

Ken. *[after a pause, in which she has somewhat collected herself.]* Not by degrees can we relinquish
 life;

Quick, sudden, in the twinkling of an eye
 The separation must be made, the change
 From temp'ral, to eternal life;—and God
 Imparted to our mistress at this moment
 His grace, to cast away each earthly hope,
 And firm and full of faith to mount the skies.
 No sign of pallid fear dishonour'd her;
 No word of mourning, 'till she heard the tidings
 Of Leicester's shameful treach'ry, the sad fate
 Of the deserving youth, who sacrific'd

Himself for her : the deep, the heartfelt anguish
 Of the old knight, who lost, through her, his last,
 His only hope; till then she shed no tear,—
 'Twas then her tears began to flow, 'twas not
 Her own, 'twas other's woe which forc'd them from her.

Mel. Where is she now ? Can you not lead me to
 her ?

Ken. She spent the last remainder of the night
 In pray'r, and from her dearest friends she took
 Her last farewell in writing:—then she wrote
 Her will with her own hand. She now enjoys
 A moment of repose, the latest slumber
 Refreshes her weak spirits.—

Mel. Who attends her ?

Ken. None but her women and physician Burgoyne :
 You seem to look around you with surprise ;
 Your eyes appear to ask me what should mean
 This shew of splendour in the house of death.—
 O, Sir, we suffer'd in our life-time want ;
 With death alone returns abundance to us.

To them, Margaret Curl.

Ken. How, madam, fares the Queen? Is she awake?

Curl. [*drying her tears.*] She is already drest—she asks for you.—

Ken. I go;— [*to Melvil, who seems to wish to accompany her.*] But follow not, until the Queen Has been prepar'd to see you.— [*she goes.*]

Curl. Melvil, sure,
The ancient steward?—

Mel. Yes; tis he.—

Curl. O, Sir,
This is a house which needs no steward now!
Melvil, you come from London; can you give
No tidings of my husband?—

Mel. It is said
He will be set at liberty, as soon—

Curl. As soon as our dear Queen shall be no more.—
O, the unworthy, the disgraceful traitor!
He is our Lady's murderer—'tis said
It was his testimony which condemn'd her.

Mel. 'Tis true.—

Curl. O, curse upon him!—be his soul
Condemn'd for ever!—he has borne false witness—

Mel. Think, madam, what you say.—

Curl. I will maintain it
With ev'ry sacred oath, before the court,
I will repeat it in his very face ;
The world shall hear of nothing else.—I say
That she dies innocent!—

Mel. God grant it true!

To them, Hannah Kennedy.

Ken. [*to Curl.*] Go, madam, and require a cup of
wine—

'Tis for our lady.—

Mel. Is the Queen then sick ?

Ken. She thinks that she is strong ; she is deceiv'd
By her heroic courage ; she believes
She has no need of nourishment ; yet still
A hard and painful task 's allotted her.
Her enemies shall not enjoy the triumph ;

They shall not say that fear hath bleach'd her cheeks,
When her fatigues have conquer'd human weakness.

Mel. May I approach her?—

Ken. She will come herself.

To them, Burgoyne. [*two women of the chamber follow him,
weeping, and in deep mourning.*]

Burg. O, Melvil!—

Mel. O, Burgoyne! [*they embrace silently.*]

First Woman. [*to the Nurse.*] She chose to be
Alone:—she wishes, at this awful moment,
For the last time, to commune with her God.

*To them, Margaret Curl, bearing a golden cup of wine;
she places it hastily upon the table, and leans, pale and
trembling, against a chair.*

Mel. How, madam! what has frighten'd you?

Ken. O God!

Burg. Speak, madam.—

Curl. What, alas ! have I beheld !

Mel. Come to yourself, and say what you have seen !

Curl. As I went down the staircase which conducts
To the great hall below, a door stood open ;
I look'd into the chamber, and I saw—
O God !—

Mel. What saw you ?—

Curl. All the walls were cover'd
With black ; a spacious scaffold too o'erspread
With sable cloth, was rais'd above the floor,
And in the middle of the scaffold stood
A dreadful sable block !—upon it lay
A naked, polish'd axe :—the hall was full
Of cruel people, crowding round the scaffold ;
Who, with a horrid thirst for human blood,
Seem'd waiting for the victim !—

The Women. God in Heav'n
Protect our Queen !—

Mel. Be calm ; the Queen approaches

To them, Mary in white and sumptuously arrayed, as for a festival: she wears hanging from her neck, on a row of small beads, an Agnus Dei; a rosary hangs from her girdle; she bears a crucifix in her hand, and a diadem of precious stones binds her hair; her large black veil is thrown back. On her entrance, all present fall back on both sides with the most violent expressions of anguish. Melvil falls involuntarily upon his knees.

Mary. [*with quiet majesty, looking round the whole circle.*] Why these complaints? why weep ye? ye should rather .

Rejoice with me, that now at length the end
Of my long woe approaches; that my shackles
Fall off, my prison opens, and my soul
Delighted mounts on seraph's wings, and seeks
The land of everlasting liberty.

When I was offer'd up to the oppression
Of my proud enemy, was forc'd to suffer
Ignoble taunts, and what is not becoming
A free and sov'reign Queen, then was the time

To weep for me ; but, as an earnest friend,
 Beneficent and healing death approaches.
 All the indignities which I have suffer'd
 On earth, are cover'd by his sable wings.
 The most degraded criminal's ennobled
 By his last sufferings, by his final exit ;
 I feel again the crown upon my brows.
 And dignity possess my gen'rous soul !

[advancing a few steps.]

How ! Melvil here !—my worthy Sir, not so ;
 Arise ; you rather come in time to see
 The triumph of your mistress, than her death.
 One comfort, which I never had expected,
 Is granted me ; that, after death, my name
 Will not be quite abandon'd to my foes ;
 One friend at least, one partner of my faith,
 Will be my witness in the hour of death.
 Say, honest Melvil, how you far'd the while
 In this inhospitable, hostile land ?
 For since the time they tore you from my side,
 My fears for you have oft depress'd my soul..

Mel. No other evil gall'd me, but my anguish
 For thee, and that I wanted pow'r to serve thee.

Mary. How fares old Didier, my chamberlain?
But sure the faithful servant long has slept
The sleep of death, for he was full of years.—

Mel. God hath not granted him as yet this grace;
He lives to see the grave o'erwhelm thy youth.

Mary. O ! Could I but have felt before my
death,

The happiness of pressing one descendant
Of the dear blood of Stuart to my bosom;
But I must suffer in a foreign land,
None but my servants to bewail my fate !
Sir ; to your loyal bosom I commit
My latest wishes—bear then, Sir, my blessing
To the most Christian king, my royal brother,
And the whole royal family of France.
I bless the Cardinal, my honour'd uncle,
And also Henry Guise, my noble cousin.—
I bless the holy Father, the vicegerent
Of Christ on earth, who will, I trust, bless me.—
I bless the king of Spain, who nobly offer'd
Himself as my deliv'rer, my avenger.
They are remember'd in my will : I hope
That they will not despise, how poor soe'er

They be, the presents of a heart which loves them.

[turning to her servants.]

I have bequeath'd you to my royal brother
Of France; he will protect you, he will give you
Another country, and a better home ;
And if my last desire have any weight,
Stay not in England; let no haughty Briton
Glut his proud heart with your calamities,
Nor see those in the dust, who once were mine.
Swear by this image of our suff'ring Lord,
To leave this fatal land, when I'm no more.

Mel. *[touching the crucifix.]* I swear obedience, in
the name of all.

Mary. What I, though poor and plunder'd, still
possess,
Of which I am allow'd to make disposal,
Shall be 'mongst you divided ; for I hope,
In this at least, my will may be fulfill'd.
What too I wear upon the path of death,
Is yours—nor envy me on this occasion,
The pomp of earth upon the road to heav'n:

[to the ladies of her chamber.]

To you, my Alice, Gertrude, Rosamund,

I leave my pearls, my garments : ye are young,
 And you may still be pleas'd with ornament.
 You, Marg'ret, have on me the nearest claims,
 To you I should be gen'rous : for I leave you
 The most unhappy woman of them all.
 That I have not aveng'd your husband's fault
 On you, I hope my legacy will prove.—
 The worth of gold, my Hannah, charms not thee;
 Nor the magnificence of precious stones :
 My memory, I know it, is to thee
 The dearest jewel ; take this handkerchief,
 I work'd it for thee, in the hours of sorrow,
 With my own hands, and my hot scalding tears
 Are woven in the texture :—you will bind
 My eyes with this, when it is time : this last
 Sad service I would wish but from my Hannah.

Ken. O Melvil ! I cannot support it.—

Mary. Come,

Come all then, and receive my last farewell.

[she stretches forth her hands ; the women violently weeping, fall successively at her feet, and kiss her outstretched hand.]

Marg'ret, farewell—my Alice, fare thee well ;

Thanks Burgoyne, for thy honest faithful service—
 Thy lips are hot, my 'Gertrude :—I have been
 Much hated, yet have been as much belov'd.—
 May a deserving husband bless my Gertrude,
 For this warm glowing heart is form'd for love.—
 Bertha, thy choice is better, thou hadst rather
 Become the chaste and pious bride of heav'n ;—
 O ! haste thee to fulfil thy vows ;—the goods
 Of earth are all deceitful ;—thou may'st learn
 This lesson from thy Queen.—No more ; farewell,
 Farewell ; farewell, my friends, farewell for ever.

*[she turns suddenly from them ; all but Melvil retire
 at different sides.]*

Mary, Melvil.

Mary. *[after the others are all gone.]* I have ar-
 rang'd all temporal concerns,
 And hope to leave the world in debt to none ;
 Melvil, one thought alone there is, which binds
 My troubled soul, nor suffers it to fly
 Delighted, and at liberty, to heav'n.

Mel. Disclose it to me ; ease your bosom, trust
 Your doubts, your sorrows to your faithful friend.

Mary. I see eternity's abyss before me ;—
 Soon must I stand before the highest judge,
 And have not yet appeas'd the holy one.—
 A priest of my religion is denied me,
 And I disdain to take the sacrament,
 The holy, heav'nly nourishment, from priests
 Of a false faith ; I die in the belief
 Of my own church, for that alone can save.

Mel. Compose your heart ; the fervent pious wish
 Is priz'd in heav'n as high as the performance.
 The might of tyrants can but bind the hands,
 The heart's devotion rises free to God,
 The word is dead—'tis faith which brings to life.

Mary. The heart is not sufficient of itself ;
 Our faith must have some earthly pledge to ground
 Its claims to the high bliss of heav'n. For this
 Our God became incarnate, and inclos'd
 Mysteriously his unseen heav'nly grace
 Within the outward figure of a body.
 The church it is, the holy one, the high one,
 Which rears for us the ladder up to heav'n :—
 'Tis call'd the general, the Catholic church,
 For 'tis but gen'ral faith can strengthen faith ;

Where thousands worship and adore, the heat
 Breaks out in flame, and borne on eagle wings,
 The soul mounts upwards to the heav'n of heav'ns.
 Ah ! happy they, who for the glad communion
 Of pious pray'r, meet in the house of God !
 The altar is adorn'd, the tapers blaze,
 The bell invites, the incense smokes around,
 The bishop stands enrob'd, he takes the cup,
 And blessing it, declares the solemn marvel,
 The transformation of the elements ;
 And the believing people fall delighted
 To worship and adore the present Godhead.
 Alas !—I only am debarr'd from this ;
 The heav'nly benediction pierces not
 My prison walls : its comfort is denied me.

Mel. Yes ! it can pierce them—put thy trust in
 him

Who is almighty—in the hand of faith,
 The wither'd staff can send forth verdant branches ;
 And he who from the rock call'd living water,
 He can prepare an altar in this prison,
 Can change—

[seizing the cup, which stands upon the table.]

The earthly contents of this cup
 Into a substance of celestial grace.

Mary. Melvil!—O yes, I understand you, Melvil!
 Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament;
 But the Redeemer says, “When two or three
 Are in my name assembled, I am with them.
 What consecrates the priest?—say, what ordains
 him

To be the Lord’s interpreter?—a heart
 Devoid of guile, and a reproachless conduct.
 Well then, though unordain’d, be you my priest;
 To you will I confide my last confession,
 And take my absolution from your lips.

Mel. If then thy heart be with such zeal inflam’d,
 I tell thee, that for thy special comfort,
 The Lord may work a miracle. Thou say’st
 Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament—
 Thou err’st—here is a priest—here is a God;
 A god descends to thee in real presence.

*[at these words he uncovers his head, and shews a
 host in a golden vessel.]*

I am a priest—to hear thy last confession,
 And to announce to thee the peace of God

Upon thy way to death. I have receiv'd
 Upon my head the seven consecrations.
 I bring thee, from his Holiness, this host,
 Which, for thy use, himself has deign'd to bless.

Mary. Is then a heav'nly happiness prepar'd
 To cheer me on the very verge of death!
 As an immortal one on golden clouds
 Descends, as once the angel from on high,
 Deliver'd the Apostle from his fetters:—
 He scorns all bars, he scorns the soldier's sword,
 He steps undaunted through the bolted portals,
 And fills the dungeon with his native glory;
 Thus here the messenger of Heav'n appears,
 When ev'ry earthly champion had deceiv'd me.
 And you, my servant once, are now the servant
 Of the most high, and his immortal word!—
 As before *me* your knees were wont to bend,
 Now humbled before *you*, I kiss the dust.

[she sinks before him on her knees.]

Mel. *[making over her the sign of the cross.]* Hear,
 Mary Queen of Scotland:—In the name
 Of God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost,
 Hast thou examin'd carefully thy heart,

Swear'st thou, art thou prepar'd in thy confession
To speak the truth before the God of truth?

Mary. Before my God and thee, my heart lies
open.

Mel. What calls thee to the presence of the Highest!

Mary. I humbly do acknowledge to have err'd
Most grievously, I tremble to approach,
Sullied with sin, the God of purity.

Mel. Declare the sin which weighs so heavily
Upon thy conscience, since thy last confession,

Mary. My heart was fill'd with thoughts of envious
hate,

And vengeance took possession of my bosom.
I hope forgiveness of my sins from God,
Yet could I not forgive my enemy.

Mel. Repent'st thou of the sin?—art thou, in sooth,
Resolv'd to leave this world at peace with all?

Mary. As surely as I wish the joys of heav'n.

Mel. What other sin hath arm'd thy heart against
thee?

Mary. Ah! not alone through hate; through law-
less love

Have I still more abus'd the sov'reign good,—

My heart was vainly turn'd towards the man,
Who left me in misfortune, who deceiv'd me.

Mel. Repent'st thou of the sin? and hast thou
turn'd

Thy heart, from this idolatry, to God?

Mary. It was the hardest trial I have pass'd;
This last of earthly bands is torn asunder.

Mel. What other sin disturbs thy guilty conscience?

Mary. A bloody crime, indeed of antient date,
And long ago confess'd; yet with new terrors,
It now attacks me, black and grisly steps
Across my path, and shuts the gates of heav'n:—
By my connivance fell the king, my husband—
I gave my hand and heart to a seducer—
By rigid penance I have made atonement;
Yet in my soul the worm is still awake.

Mel. Has then thy heart no other accusation,
Which hath not been confess'd and wash'd away?

Mary. All you have heard, with which my heart is
charg'd.

Mel. Think on the presence of omniscience;—
Think on the punishments, with which the church
Threatens imperfect, and reserv'd confession!

This is the sin to everlasting death,
For this is sinning 'gainst his holy spirit.

Mary. So may eternal grace with victory
Crown my last contest, as I wittingly
Have nothing hid—

Mel. How? wilt thou then conceal
The crime from God, for which thou art condemn'd?
Thou tell'st me nothing of the share thou had'st,
In Babington's, and Parry's bloody treason :
Thou diest for this a temp'ral death, for this
Wilt thou too die the everlasting death?

Mary. I am prepar'd to meet eternity ;—
Within the narrow limits of an hour,
I shall appear before my judge's throne ;—
But, I repeat it, my confession's ended.

Mel. Consider well—the heart is a deceiver.—
Thou hast perhaps, with sly equivocation,
The word avoided, which would make thee guilty,
Although thy will was party to the crime.
Remember, that no juggler's tricks can blind
The eye of fire which darts through ev'ry breast.

Mary. 'Tis true, that I have call'd upon all
princes

To free me from unworthy chains; yet 'tis
As true, that neither by intent or deed,
I have attempted my oppressor's life.

Mel. Your secretaries then have witness'd falsely.

Mary. It is, as I have said;—what they have
witness'd

The Lord will judge.—

Mel. Thou mount'st then, satisfied
Of thy own innocence, the bloody scaffold?

Mary. God suffers me in mercy to atone
By undeserved death, my youth's transgressions.

Mel. [*making over her the sign of the cross.*] Go then,
and expiate them all by death;—
Sink a devoted victim on the altar,—
Thus shall thy blood atone the blood thou
spill'dst.

From female frailty were deriv'd thy faults,
Free from the weakness of mortality,
The spotless spirit seeks the blest abodes.
Now then, by the authority which God
Hath unto me committed, I absolve thee
From all thy sins—be as thy faith thy welfare!

[*he gives her the host.*]

Receive the body which for thee was offer'd—

[he takes the cup which stands upon the table, consecrates it with silent prayer, then presents it to her; she hesitates to take it, and makes signs to him to withdraw it.]

Receive the blood, which for thy sins was shed—

Receive it—'tis allow'd thee by the Pope,

To exercise in death the highest office

Of kings, the holy office of the priesthood.

[she takes the cup.]

And as thou now in this his earthly body

Hast held with God mysterious communion,

So may'st thou henceforth, in his realm of joy,

Where sin no more exists, nor tears of woe,

A fair transfigur'd spirit, join thyself

For ever with the Godhead, and for ever.

[he sets down the cup; hearing a noise, he covers his head, and goes to the door; Mary remains in silent devotion, on her knees.]

Mel. *[returning.]* A painful conflict is in store for thee;

Feel'st thou within thee strength enough to smother
Each impulse of malignity and hate?

Mary. I fear not a relapse; I have devoted
My hatred, and my love to God.—

Mel. Well then
Prepare thee to receive the Earl of Leicester,
And the Lord Treasurer; they are arriv'd.

*To them, Burleigh, Leicester, and Paulet. [Leicester
remains in the back ground, without raising his eyes;
Burleigh, who remarks his confusion, steps between him
and the Queen.]*

Bur. I come, my Lady Stuart, to receive
Your last commands and wishes.

Mary. Thanks, my Lord..

Bur. It is the pleasure of my royal mistress,
That nothing reasonable be denied you.

Mary. My will, my Lord, declares my last desires;
I laid it in the hand of Sir Amias,
And humbly beg, that it may be fulfill'd.

Paul. Depend upon it.—

Mary. And I beg permission
For all my servants to return to France,
Or Scotland undisturb'd, as they may wish.

Bur. It shall be done.

Mary. And since my body here
Is not to rest in consecrated ground,
I pray you suffer this my faithful servant
To bear my heart to France, to my relations—
Alas! 'twas ever there.—

Bur. All shall be done
According to your wishes.

Mary. To the Queen
Of England bear a sister's salutation ;
Tell her, that from the bottom of my heart
I pardon her my death : with penitence
I beg too *her* forgiveness, for the passion
With which I spoke to her. May God preserve her,
And bless her with a long and prosp'rous reign !

Bur. Say, have you then not chang'd your resolution,
Refuse you still all spiritual assistance ?

Mary. I have appeas'd my God.—
My worthy Sir, *[to Paulet.]*
I have unwittingly, and innocently,
Caus'd you much sorrow. I have torn from you
Your ages last support. O let me hope

You do not think of me in bitterness.—

Paul. [*giving her his hand.*] The Lord be with you !
go your way in peace.—

To them Hannah Kennedy, and the other women of the Queen crowd into the room, with marks of horror. The Sheriff follows them, a white staff in his hand ; behind are seen through the open doors, men under arms.

Mary. What ails thee, Hannah ?—yes—my hour
is come—

The Sheriff comes to lead me to my fate,
And part we must—farewell !—

Ken. and Curl. We will not leave thee,
We will not part from thee.—

Mary. [*to Melvil.*] You, worthy Sir,
And my dear faithful Hannah, shall attend me,
In my last moments. I am sure, my Lord
Will not refuse my heart this consolation,

Bur. For this I have no warrant.

Mary. How, my Lord ;
Can you refuse me then this small petition ?

Respect my sex ; who shall attend me then,
And yield me the last service ?—sure it never
Can be my sister's pleasure, that in me
My sex should be offended ; that these men
With their rude hands, should touch my royal person.

Bur. 'Tis order'd, that no woman shall ascend
With you, the scaffold steps—their tears and moans—

Mary. She shall not weep, my Lord, she shall not
moan ;

I answer for my Hannah's resolution :
Be merciful ; divide me not so soon
From my true foster-mother, from my friend.—
She bore me on her arms into this life,
Let her then gently lead me to my death.—

Paul. [*to Burleigh.*] Allow it her.—

Bur. Then be it so.—

Mary. I now
Have nothing in this world to wish for more.

[she take the crucifix, and kisses it.

My God ! my Comforter ! my blest Redeemer !
As once thy arms were stretch'd upon the cross,
Let them be now extended to receive me !

[she turns round to go, at the same moment her eyes fall

upon Leicester, who, on her going, starts involuntarily and turns his eyes towards her: at this sight Mary trembles, her knees fail her, she is about to fall, when Leicester catches at her, and receives her in his arms; she regards him for some time earnestly, and in silence; he cannot support her looks; at length she speaks.

You keep your word, Lord Leicester: for you promis'd
 To lend your arm to lead me from this prison,
 And now you lend it me; at last the day,
 The long desir'd day's arriv'd, and what
 Was oft the object of my fondest dreams
 Is now accomplish'd: and the Earl of Leices
 The long expected, the long wish'd for friend,
 Appears at length in ^{the} ~~the~~ otheringay-castle.—
 I see him standing in my prison; all
 Is ready for the journey; all the gates
 Stand open, and at length I cross the threshold,
 Conducted by his hand; and now I leave
 These dismal walls behind me, and for ever.—
 All is fulfill'd, and you have sav'd your honour.—

[he stands as if annihilated; she continues, with a gentle voice.]

Yes, Leicester ; not for liberty alone
 I wish'd to be indebted to your hands—
 You should too have endear'd my liberty !—
 Led by your hand, and bless'd by your affection,
 I hop'd once more to taste the joys of life.—
 Yes ; now that I'm prepar'd from all the world
 To part, and to become a happy spirit,
 Whom earthly inclinations tempt no more,
 Now, Leicester, I may venture to confess
 Without a blush, the frailty I have conquer'd.—
 Farewell, my lord ; and, if you can, be happy !—
 'Twas your distinguish'd lot to woo two Queens—
 You have disdain'd a tender, loving heart ;
 Betray'd it, in the hope to win a proud one :
 Kneel at the feet of Queen Elizabeth !
 May your reward not prove your punishment.—
 Farewell ; I now have nothing more on earth.

*[she goes, preceded by the Sheriff, at her side Melvil,
 and her Nurse, Burleigh and Paulet follow, the
 others wailing, follow her with their eyes till she
 disappears ; they then retire through the other two
 doors.]*

Leicester, remaining alone.

And live I still?—can I support to live?—
 Falls not this roof with all its weight upon me?
 Gapes no abyss, to swallow in its gulph
 The veriest wretch on earth? What have I lost?—
 To throw away this pearl from me!—to cast away
 The highest happiness in heaven's store!—
 She meets her death, is deified already;
 And the despair of hell remains for me!—
 Where is the purpose, which I had to drown
 Unfeeling, the voice of my affection?
 Unmov'd to see her murdered?—must remorse,
 Slumb'ring remorse, be waken'd by her presence;
 Must she in death spread toils of love around me?—
 Wretch that I am!—no more it suits me now
 To melt away, in womanly compassion:
 The bliss of love hath left the paths I tread.—
 Let me then arm me with a brazen breast-plate,
 A rock of adamant surround my brows!—
 Would I not lose the price of my misdeeds,
 Boldly must I maintain, and execute them.
 Pity be dumb, my eyes be petrified!

I'll see her fall, I will be witness of it.

[he goes with resolute steps towards the door, through which Mary passed; but stops suddenly half way.

In vain!—the terrors of the damn'd possess me.—

I cannot, cannot see the dreadful deed ;

I cannot see her die—Hear !—what was that ?

They are already there—beneath my feet

The horrid consummation is prepar'd —

I hear them speaking—God !—Away—away—

Away from this abode of death and terror!—

[he attempts to escape by another door; finds it locked, and returns.

How !—am I rivetted upon this spot ?—

Must I then hear, what I cannot behold ?

I hear the Dean address her ; he exhorts her ;

She interrupts him. Now, I hear her pray.

Her voice is firm—now all is still, quite still !—

I hear but broken sighs and women's moans.—

Now, they undress her—they remove the stool—

She kneels upon the cushion—lays her head—

[having spoken these last words, and paused awhile, he is seen with a convulsive motion, suddenly to shrink, and faint away; a dull noise of voices is at once heard from below, and continues for some time.

*Scene changes to—*THE SECOND CHAMBER IN THE
FOURTH ACT.

Eliz. [*entering from a side door; her gait and action expressive of the most violent uneasiness.*] No message!—no one here!—stands the sun still

In its ætherial course?—must I remain
Longer upon the rack of expectation?
Is it accomplish'd?—is it not?—I shudder
At both;—I am afraid to ask the question.
Leicester and Burleigh are not yet return'd,
Whom I appointed to fulfill the sentence.—
Are they already gone?—if so, it is
Already done; the arrow's shot; it flies,
It strikes; it has already hit the mark;
And, were my realm the price, I could not stop it!—
Who's there?—

Enter a Page.

Eliz. Thou com'st alone? Where are the Lords?

Page. My Lord High Treas'rer, and the Earl of
Leicester—

Eliz. Where are they?—

Page. They are not in London.—

Eliz. No?—

Where are they *then*?—

Page. That no one could inform me;
Before the dawn, mysteriously and hasting,
They quitted London.—

Eliz. [*exultingly.*] I am Queen of England!—
[*walking up and down in the greatest agitation.*]
Go—call me—no, remain—no!—she is dead—
Now I at length have room upon this earth.—
Why tremble I?—why this anxiety?
My fears are cover'd by the grave; who dares
To say I did it?—I have tears enough
In store to weep her fall.—Are *you* still here?—

[*to the Page.*

Command the Secretary Davison,
To come to me this instant.—Let the Earl
Of Shrewsbury be summon'd.—Here he comes.—

[*Exit Page.*

Enter Shrewsbury.

Eliz. Welcome, my noble Lord ; what brings
you ?—say—

It cannot be a trifle which hath led
Your footsteps hither at so late an hour.—

Shrews. My Queen, in anxious pain for thy renown,
I sought the tower, where the secretaries
Of Mary Stuart are confin'd.—I wish'd
Once more to put to proof their evidence.—
On my arrival the lieutenant seem'd
Embarrass'd and perplex'd ; refus'd to shew me
His pris'ners ; but my threats obtain'd admittance.
God ! what a sight was there ! with frantic looks,
With hair dishevell'd, on his pallet lay
The Scot, like one tormented by a fury.
The miserable man no sooner sees me,
Than falling at my feet, with screams, embracing
My knees, and writhing like a worm before me ;
He supplicates, conjures me to relate
His Sov'reign's destiny. A dread report,

He said, had reach'd the dungeons of the tow'r,
 That she had been condemn'd to suffer death.—
 As I confirm'd these tidings, adding too,
 That 'twas his evidence which had condemn'd her,—
 Sudden he started up, and rudely seiz'd
 His fellow pris'ner ; with the giant strength
 Of madness tore him to the ground, and strove
 To strangle him : no sooner had we sav'd
 The wretch from his fierce grapple, than at once
 He turn'd his rage against himself, and beat
 With savage fists his bosom ; curs'd himself
 And his companions to the depths of hell !
 His evidence was false ; the fatal letters
 To Babington, which he had testified
 As genuine, were forg'd ; he had transcrib'd
 Quite diff'rent words from those the Queen had
 spoken,
 The traitor Nare had led him to this treason.—
 Then ran he to the window, tore it open
 With frantic violence, and scream'd aloud
 Into the street below, that all the people
 Together crowded.—I, cried he, am he ;
 The Secretary of the Queen of Scotland,

The traitor, who accus'd his mistress falsely;
 Accurst for ever !—I have borne false witness.

Eliz. You said yourself, that he had lost his wits ;
 A madman's words prove nothing.—

Shrews. Yet his madness
 Itself proves but the more.—O gracious Queen!
 Let me conjure thee ; be not over hasty ;
 Command the cause to be again examin'd.

Eliz. It shall be done, my Lord, because you wish it,
 Not in the meaning, that the noble peers
 Can in this case have giv'n a hasty judgment.
 For your tranquillity, my Lord, the trial
 Shall be renew'd—well, that 'tis not too late—
 'Tis very well—no—not the smallest shade
 Of doubt shall rest upon our royal honour.—

Enter Davison.

Eliz. Give me the sentence, Sir, which to your care
 I late committed ;—where is it ?—

Dav. [*in the utmost astonishment.*] The sentence!—

Eliz. [*more urgent.*] Which lately I entrusted to
 your keeping.—

Dav. Entrusted to my keeping!—

Eliz. As the people

Press'd me to sign it, I was forc'd to yield—

I did so ; yet forsooth unwillingly,

And laid the paper in your hand.—I wish'd

But to gain time ; you must remember well

What I then said to you.—Now, Sir, where is it?—

Shrews. Give it, good Sir ; affairs since then have
taken

Another turn, the cause must be renew'd.

Dav. Renew'd !—eternal mercy !

Eliz. Why this pause,

This hesitation ?—say, Sir, where's the paper ?

Dav. I am undone ! I am destroy'd for ever !

Eliz. [interrupting him violently.] Let me not fancy,
Sir—

Dav. O I am lost!—

I have it not,—

Eliz. How ? what ?

Shrews. O, God in heav'n !

Dav. It is in Burleigh's hands ; since yesterday—

Eliz. Wretch that you are ! have you then thus
obey'd me ?

Was it not my express command to you
To keep it carefully ?

Dav. My Queen, thou gav'st
No such command—

Eliz. Vile traitor !—will you then
Accuse me of a falsehood ?—when did I
Direct you to deliver it to Burleigh ?—

Dav. Not in express, plain words ; yet—

Eliz. Dare you then
Interpret, as you list, my words, and lay
Your bloody meaning on them ? Woe betide you,
If evil come of this officious deed !—

Yes, Sir ; your life shall answer the event.—
Earl Shrewsbury, you see how here my name
Is sported with !—

Shrews. I see !—O God in heav'n !—

Eliz. What say you ?—

Shrews. If the Knight has dar'd to act
In this, upon his own authority,
Without thy knowledge, he must be conven'd
Before the high tribunal of the peers,
For subjecting thy name to the contempt
And loathing of all future generations.

Enter Burleigh.

Bur. [*bowing his knee before the Queen.*] Long life
and glory to my royal mistress,
And may all enemies of her dominions
End like this Stuart.— [*Shrewsbury hides his face;—*
Davison wrings his hands in desperation.

Eliz. Speak, my lord; receiv'd you
From me the fatal warrant?—

Bur. No, my Queen,
From Davison.—

Eliz. And did he in my name
Deliver it?—

Bur. No, that I cannot say.—

Eliz. And dar'd you then to execute the writ
Thus hastily, nor wait to know my pleasure? —
For this my Lord, I banish you my presence;
And as this forward will was *yours* alone,
Bear *you* alone the curse of the misdeed!—

[*to Davison.*

For, you, Sir; who have trait'rously o'erstepp'd

